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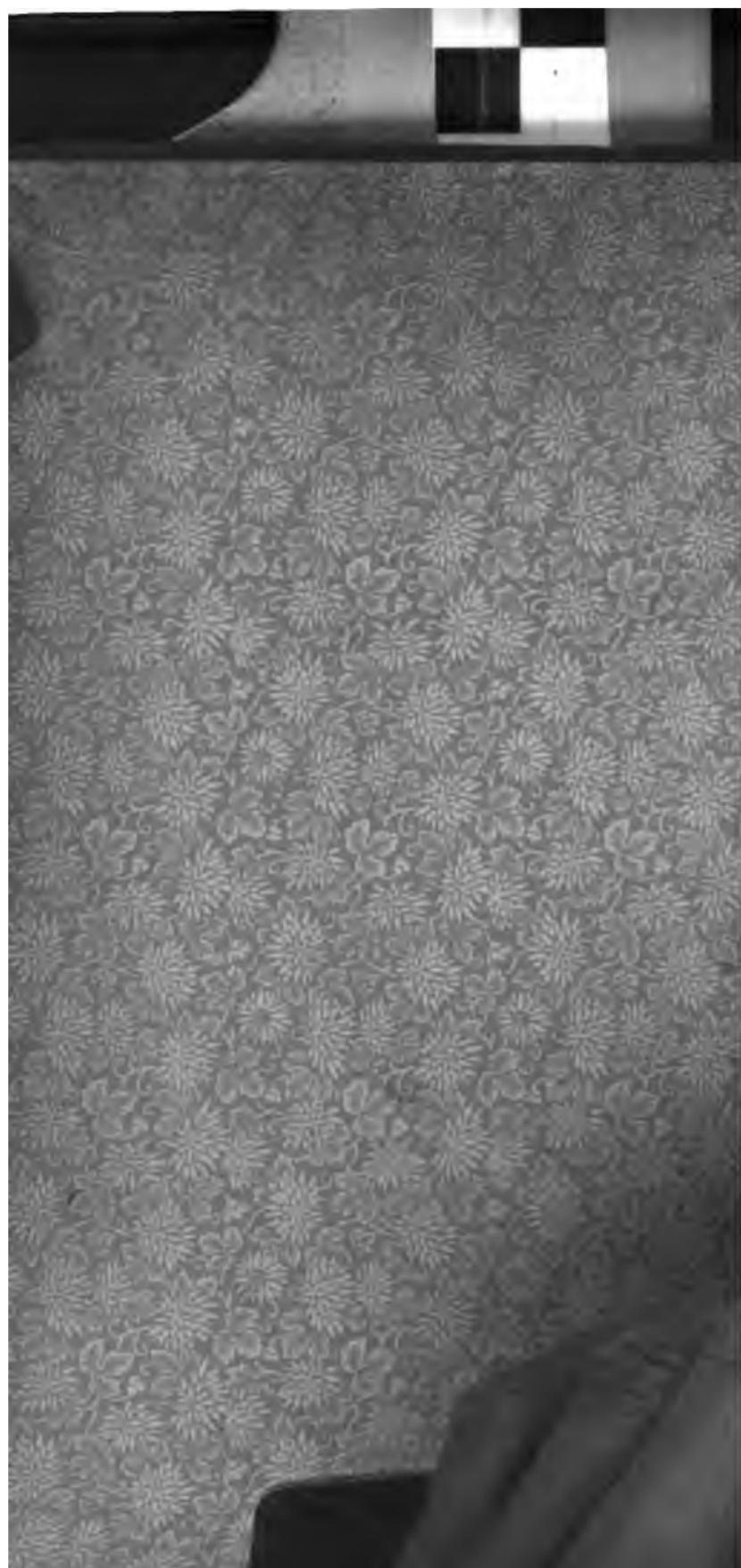
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Laurence Gibbons Esq
with Arthur and others

Aug 1903.

JENNIFRED,

AND OTHER VERSES

1061
11th October 1961



J E N N I F R E D ,

AND OTHER VERSES.

BY

SEPTIMUS G. GREEN.

Dedicated, by permission,
to
HORATIO TENNYSON, Esq.

LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1897.

A. W. A. -



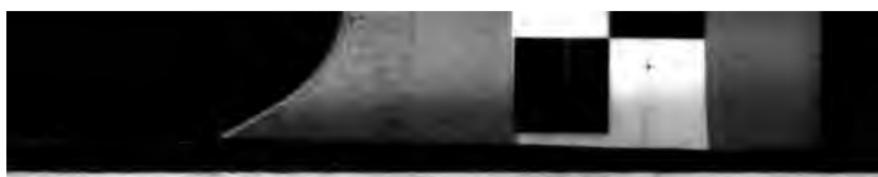
To

HORATIO TENNYSON, Esq.,

IN FULFILMENT OF AN EARLY PROMISE,

THIS VOLUME OF VERSE

Is Respectfully Dedicated.



PREFACE

-♦-♦-

THE publication of this volume of verse is the fulfilment of a hope long deferred, and I take the opportunity which it presents to express my great pleasure that, after an interval of many years, I am still able, in conformity with a long-standing promise, to dedicate them to my kind patron of past days, Horatio Tennyson, Esq., and to hope that they may still afford him some pleasure.



CONTENTS

-2-84-

	PAGE
RED	I
ROKEN VOW	26
T WRITTEN IN 1870	27
FOUNTAIN	28
RY	29
LINE	30
VENUE OF LIMES	31
E DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT	33
YING WIFE TO HER HUSBAND	36
S	38
INE, BELOVED!-	40
E WELSH DINGLES	41
LD YEAR'S DEATH	43
EWELL TO THE OLD YEAR	46
NAMELESS GRAVE	48
WYNCH	54

CONTENTS

		PAGE
SCHOOL DREAMS	-	56
MAY SONG	-	59
TO R. M.	-	60
TO THE SAME	-	62
ELEGY ON A MUSIC-MASTER	-	64
THE CLOUD	-	66
MEETING FATHER	-	69
TO MY CRITIC	-	72
SUMMER DAYS	-	73
AUTUMN SONG	-	75
NOVEMBER	-	77
A SUMMER DAY-DREAM	-	79
TO A LILY	-	86
THE GROWTH OF LOVE	-	88
THE BROOKLET	-	92
TO PATRICIA	-	97
TO AMANDA	-	101
LINES TO LINTON	-	104
IMPROMPTU LINES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE SHIP INN, PORLOCK, NOVEMBER, 1881	-	106
A TENNYSONIAN ODE	-	107
THE EDDYSTONE	-	109
TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY	-	118
JOY AND SORROW	-	122
SONG	-	124

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TO DEVON	125
MY LOVE IS FAIR	127
THE LOVER'S DEFENCE	128
THOU WERT NOT MADE TO MOURN	130
THE RIVER'S ANSWER	132
ON A MOUSE-TRAP	137
THE FORSAKEN HOME	139
LADY MARY	148
IN AN OLD GARDEN	156
DEDICATORY SONNET TO THE FOREGOING VERSES	161
WELCOME TO MARCH	162
HAWNS AND DENDLES	165
THE LOVER'S CANTICLE	168
SONG OF THE LYNS	169
TO ONE DROWNED AT SEA	170
FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE	172
THE POET AND NATURE	177
THE COLLEGE JAUNT	185
THE POET'S APOLOGY	204

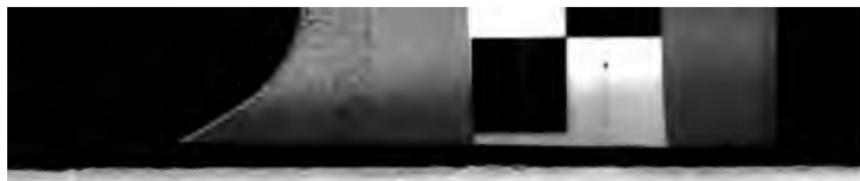


JENNIFRED:*

AN IDYLL OF DEVON.

NORTHWARD in Devon, where the utmost verge
Of Exmoor's lone, inhospitable waste
Breaks into sylvan loveliness of combes,
Oak-clad, or fair with many a waving fern,
The red-deers' dewy haunts on summer eves ;
Or opens suddenly into sounding bays,
Gloomily grand, or wooded to the wave ;
Where the dark coast unto its neighbour coast,
Across the foam of Severn's silver Sea,
Smiles, sunlit, twixt the eclipse of cloud and cloud—
Here, clinging like a sea-bird to her crag,
Above the billowy surge, and overhung
With waving woods — spring's, summer's, autumn's
 pride—
A virgin village, lovely Lynton, sits ;

* Since this poem was commenced it has been anticipated in prose by Mr R. D. Blackmore, who has taken it as one of his stories in ' Tales from the Telling House'; and in the title itself, by the Rev. Basil Edwards, author of ' Songs of a Parish Priest,' who, however, kindly waives his prior claim in my behalf, and permits its use in naming my volume. I have, however, adopted a slightly different spelling for the name of the heroine.



JENNIFRED

While at her feet, full fifty fathoms down,
Sweet Lynmouth, fairest of all ocean brides
Wild Neptune woos beneath our stormy steeps,
Sits, matron-like, in her meek privacy
Of shadow, from the busy world aloof,
With all her hamlet brood about her knee.
Her, evermore, with their loud music, lull
The rolling Lyns, that hither, many a mile,
Wind seaward from their cradle in the hills
To lose their liquid babble in the roar
Of breakers on the myriad-bouldered beach.
Most fortunate he who, from some vessel's deck,
Journeying from Ilfracombe perchance, by sea,
Or Bristol's ancient port, beholds entranced
The matchless scene, from the white tumbling wave
To yon stupendous cliff that hides at noon,
For nine long months, the sun's meridian blaze ;
Or views opposed its neighbour Lyn-Cliff grey,
Whose swelling base to left and right divides
The vales of either Lyn. Far hence a league
Along the perilous coast my story leads,
Beyond the Vale of Stones, rude rocks that seem
The product of a time ere grass, or tree,
Or whispering bush had being, or flowers fair star.
Along this rugged vale, 'tis said, long since

JENNIFRED

A mighty torrent urged its headlong way
In deafening tumult to the turbulent sea ;
Here, tumbling down, a roaring cataract,
To meet the wave that, blindly groping still,
With indefatigable hands scoops down
The crumbling cliff ; while many a stony shape
Sphinx-like, looks down upon the silent vale—
Not silent once, when 'gainst the naked breasts
Of British sires the mailed might of Rome
Broke like that wave that oft, resistless, bears
Backward the swollen Severn's angry tide ;
Nor silent now, when the insurgent sea
Calls from the Atlantic up the echoing vale,
That, like some Titan's ear, mis-shapen, huge,
Listens, with many a hollow murmur filled.
Beyond the vale a gateway opening yields
Entrance into Ley Abbey's green domain,
Girt round with woods—an amphitheatre vast—
Fronting the deep, whose ceaseless surges lave
The steadfast feet of three fair promontories,
In picturesque perspective westward seen.
'Mid these sequestered scenes long since there rose
The home of her whose name even yet these woods
Methinks do murmur—hapless Jennifred,
Sole daughter of a knight, De Wichehalse named,



JENNIFRED

Whom once these lands called lord. From veins of one
Who, on the fatal field of Gemmingen,
Battled 'gainst Alva's hordes, he drew his blood ;
Of that proud race a scion 'Beggars' named,
And by the Bloody Council doubly made
Beggars for leave to worship God, and live
According to their conscience and their creed.
'Mong these, by fortune or more foresight 'scaped
The general ruin, Hugh de Wichehalse fled
For shelter to these shores ; and here, amid
The wilds of Devon, reared another home,
Ending in peaceful exile the calm eve
Following the long and bloody day of strife,
And leaving, when death's night about him closed,
Heirs of his house to keep his name alive,
And, oft, to bind it with fresh wreaths of fame,
Till in the second Charles's days no name
Nobler than his through all the West was known ;
Nor braver knight than he, who bore it then,
Of old o'er worthier brows drew helmet down,
Or e'er laid lance in rest ; or in the lists,
Before the eyes of peasant and of prince,
Jousted at tilt or tourney for the love
Of lady fair : Sir Edward named, the last
Of all his house, for whom the joys of life

JENNIFRED

Were doubled when the knightly name he bore
Became another's, when the vows that make
Twain into one, before God's altar breathed,
Made him and the one woman of his choice
Husband and wife ; nor worthier e'er were wed,
Nor meeter for each other : he, the true
And chivalrous-hearted Christian knight ; and she,
A woman perfect in all womanly ways
That make for man an Eden here below.
But his fair Eden all too soon was reft
Of its prime flower, and all his honey of life
Spilt in her grave—all but one precious drop
That through Death's icy fingers trickling stole,
Even while they crushed the anguished mother's heart,
And into one pale bud of promise fell—
Love's parting gift—the little Jennifred.
Nor ever from the dark grave's frozen soil
Sprang there a flower of richer grace than she.
About her, like a glory, as she lay
Beneath her cradle's snowy coverlit,
Her yellow hair, her Saxon heritage,
Gleamed like the halo of some sleeping saint.
All heaven looked out from her clear eyes' blue orbs,
The mirror of her mother's and June skies.
Yet long, like one heart-hurt, De Wichehalse went,

JENNIFRED

Careless of hawk and hound, nor evermore
Found joy in festive throngs, or feats of arms ;
But, like a careful gardener, all whose hopes
Of wealth and fame are centred in one flower
Of rarest loveliness, passed all his days
In tendance of his babe, until at last
She stood before him in her maiden pride,
The Flower of all the West and Lily of Devon.
For like a golden lily all alone,
Pride of some saintly hermit's little plot,
Won from the waste with travail hard and sore,
She seemed ; and even as from a flower is blown,
By every wind, rich perfumes everywhere,
Luring all insects, butterfly or bee,
To visit it, so to De Wichehalse' halls
Came day by day some traveller from afar
To woo her : merchants with their bags of gold,
Or courtly gallants decked in rainbow hues,
The butterflies of Charles's court, where even
Across the stale and scandal-laden air,
As oft across some city clerk's close rooms
The smell of new-mown hay, her fame had blown ;
Where oft some knight would, 'mid the banquet, breathe
The perfume of her name, 'The Lily of Devon
And Flower of all the West—fair Jennifred.'

JENNIFRED

And even the village churls, on holidays,
When she to the grey fane of Lynton oft
To church would wend, with her one maid on foot,
Would gaze upon her, half abashed and half
Dazzled with her fair loveliness, and deem
Her less of earth than heaven : and one there was
Who deemed her all of heaven. Her cousin this,
Albert de Wichehalse, to Sir Edward's care
Left early orphaned, who betwixt the twain
Halved thenceforth all his heart. Two years the boy's
Brief span outnumbered Jennifred's ; hence made
Sole guardian soon of all her infant sports—
Sole friend and playfellow. For her he spoiled
The raven's nest to make a necklace fair
For her white throat ; for her with cunning snared
The squirrel in her woods, or patient reared
The callow throstle, or the captive lark,
Or trained her hound, or taught her ambling steed
To do her gentle bidding. By his side
She tracked lone Exmoor's wild for fruit or flower,
Or wandered far along the rocky shore,
Where oft her foot from the incoming wave
He timely snatched, or o'er the slippery weed
Steadied her careless steps, or lightly bore
Her in his arms across some watery chasm,



JENNIFRED

Thrilled with her nearness. Even thus it was
He learnt his love for her had dearer name
Than brother's, howsoever dear or near.
Too near he deemed her own to grow more dear.
For she with but a sister's love repaid
The growing passion buried in his heart
From her and all, until the sad day came
That sealed for each their several destinies.
O treacherous day that ope'd so smiling fair,
Yet had such darksome night!—a day, it seemed,
For love and lovers only made. No cloud
Blotted the boundless blue that overhead,
Like one large sapphire shone; no shadow dusked
The azure deep that mocked the sapphire sky.
The dewy lawns shone thick with diamond drops
That melted into mist before the sun.
A balmy wind crept through the sighing trees.
Visiting each bud that in its waxen sheath
Swelled hourly, till prophetic fancy heard
The laughter of the leaves but yet in bud.
The sea-fowls, nesting in the hollow crags,
Called to each other all about the bay,
Mingled with noise of waves and lark's loud song.
That morn Sir Edward, ere the tardy sun
Had silvered the six crescents on the shield

JENNIFRED

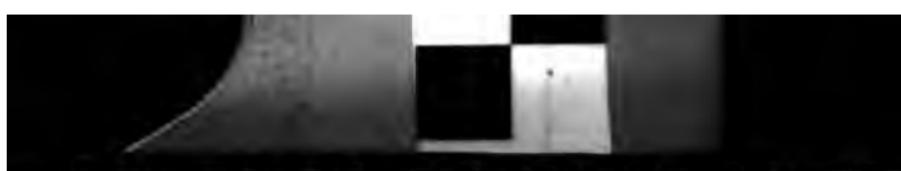
Above his gate, or seen the lion ramp
Thereon, had sallied forth with Albert, bent
On quest of moorland game, or flesh or fowl,
Leaving his daughter busy at some task
Of needful housewifery. But she not long
On such a morn could brook to be indoors,
But took her task and bent her steps to where
Albert had framed for her a rustic seat
On the tall cliff, beneath a canopy
Of mountain-ash with honeysuckle twined.
Here now she came, and toward the heaving deep
Bent her long gaze, as one who in her thoughts
Pictures some knight who stems the stormy sea,
To bear her thence with him, a blissful bride.
Then, even while she dreamed, there came in haste
One from the house with tidings of a guest,
That drew her hastily homeward, there to meet,
Bending and bowing to his saddle-bow,
Lord Auberley, the darling of the court,
On whom, wide-eyed and mute, the maiden gazed
Wondering, as at such guest as never yet
Had graced Ley's ancient halls. His doublet shone
With silk and gold, with many a gem inwrought.
With gold and gems the trappings of his steed
Sparkled, while like a star the gilded spur

JENNIFRED

Burned 'gainst his horse's fiery flank, red roan.
His velvet cloak, with Valenciennes deep fringed,
Behind him hung ; and in his hand half raised,
His cap, to Jennifred's fair presence doffed,
A heron's snowy plume displayed. In sooth
He seemed to Jennifred some fairy prince
Her thoughts had summoned suddenly to her sight ;
And she to him seemed some sweet wayside flower,
Too fair to go unworn—all innocence
And truth and gentle pity and maiden charm.
Then of her sire, and of her maiden self,
Lord Auberley, his name and rank first told,
All knightly begged in courtly phrase and fair
Brief lodgment for himself and his brave steed,
On royal business bound ; which Jennifred,
With hospitable grace, bade him believe
Granted in asking, and her father's hall
Honoured in harbouring such noble guest.
Then, summoning from without a serving-man,
Old Richard named, she bade him tend the steed,
While she Lord Auberley, dismounted, led
Within, still bowing prince-like, to the hall ;
Then, curtseying low, left him awhile to give
Her menials charge concerning the noon meal
She deemed by this her noble guest must need.

JENNIFRED

Then Auberley, the polished oaken floor
Pacing with thoughtful stride and forehead bared,
Mused on the maiden's wondrous comeliness,
Womanly beyond all others seen at court—
Vea, queenlier, as wearing on her head the crown
Of innocence and spotless virginhood's
True majesty ; and in his mind had half
Forsworn for her his baser self, resolved—
If haply he her maiden love might win—
To make her his good angel evermore.
So might he henceforth live a nobler life,
And die a knightlier death. Then on him rushed
A vision of gay, courtly dames, with gibes
Mocking the new Sir Percival, and crying
His boast of bachelorhood disproven and lost.
Then thought he straight to take a sudden leave,
Mount horse at morn, and leave the nest unspoiled :
Yet nought for his new saintliness forbore
To feast his eyes upon her innocent face
As to and fro she moved among her maids,
Heedful of all his wants. For the thin ice
Of his new virtuousness upbore him not—
Warmed by the wine within him, and the sun
Of her bright eyes—scarce longer than an hour
Of her sweet company, and the knight, her sire's.



JENNIFRED

With Albert from his morning quest returned
With flesh and fowl, the moorlands' ample spoil.
Then, after the noon meal, his guest the knight
Showed, host-like, all the wonders of the place—
His hawks, his hounds, his horses, and his halls
Hung with the ancient armour of his house,
His pleasaunce fair, and all the winding ways
Of woodland, and the lonely vale that lies
Listening to the great deep, that evermore
Sings in its rugged ear a song of death ;
Then home, and with the setting sun to bed
They hied, where Auberley in dreams beheld
A warning figure by his bed that wore
Strange semblance of fair Jennifred's sweet self,
But pale and hollow-cheeked ; her mother's ghost,
Doubtless, disturbed for her dear daughter's sake.
Then in the morning melted, like his mood
Of overnight, the vision from his gaze ;
While Jennifred in fitful slumbers sailed
All night past perilous shores with one who bore
Lord Auberley's gay likeness at the helm,
Who steered the vessel towards a land unknown,
That on the horizon glimmered dark and low
With noise of breakers breaking on the shore.
Then also with the morn her vision passed,

JENNIFRED

And Youth and Hope awoke, and infant Love
Cried in the cradle of her heart for love's
Sweet food—bright glances, honeyed words and smiles—
And all the witchery that lovers use ;
Nor hungered long, when round the festal board
She met Lord Auberley's fast-kindling gaze
Of passion, melting all her soul to love,
Nor guessed his glozing words the serpent's voice,
Nor looks dark Vice's basilisk gaze that lures
Virtue, the innocent fawn, within its jaws.
Then day by day, to please his princely guest,
De Wichehalse and his nephew, Albert, made
Fresh sports and pastimes, and beguiled the time
With friendly tilt and feats with lance and sword,
Where Auberley to Jennifred seemed aye
Another Launcelot, and dearer day by day.
But Albert ever liked him less and less,
As seeing beneath the gloss the serpent's scales,
Or smitten with love's canker—jealousy.
Then, after many a morn of merriment,
Lord Auberley bethought him all at once
Of the king's errand, so took a courteous leave
Of his good host, the tears of Jennifred
Dewing his doublet, who with his parting words,
'I go, love, but to come again,' beguiled

JENNIFRED

Henceforth her heart's new ache, with sad, sweet voice
Singing them to a tune herself had made
To the soft music of her harpsichord :

' I go, love, but to come again ;
Not sooner autumn's waning woods
Shall burgeon into April buds
Than, love, to thee I come again.

' I go, love, but to come again ;
Not surer after darkling night
With each new morn steals up the light
Than, love, to thee I come again.

' I go, love, but to come again ;
Not swifter up yon shining strand
The wave impetuous leaps to land,
Than, love, to thee I come again.'

Thus went Lord Auberley, forsworn, nor came
Again for ever ; while sad Jennifred
Pined and grew pale, till famished Hope lay dead
Within her breast, like bird within its cage,
That beats its little life out 'gainst the bars.
Yet Love lived on, nor lessened, till one morn
There came a rumour to Sir Edward's ears
That Jennifred's false knight should shortly wed

JENNIFRED

A Spanish bride for gold to mend the rents
In his worn fortunes by wild courses made.
Then calling to him his old serving-man,
Richard, to him the troublous tale he told,
And bade him haste, mount horse, and swiftly ride
To the city, and find out the certainty of it.
Then Richard went, and on the tenth day saw
The city's smoke, and heard anon the sounds
Of unfamiliar riot, and beheld
Strange faces throng him, and bethought himself
Of Sodom, or of ancient Nineveh,
Hell-doomed by the fierce prophet from the sea.
Then 'gan he straight his quest of Auberley,
Nor needful found long search ; well known to all
'Lord Auberley, the darling of the court,
New-wedded to a wealthy Spanish bride'
(Such the unvaried tale). Then wended he
His way to Auberley's gay halls, and found
That rumour lied not. Even now within
Were feasting and loud mirth, and open house
To all, and on the trampled lawns without
Were morris-dance and May-day mummeries,
Wrestling and running, where Richard all about
Wandered at will, and from the servants learned
Fresh confirmation of their lord's wild ways.

JENNIFRED

Till, turning round to quit the place, he lost
His way amid the labyrinths of the house,
And found a door, and, opening, saw within
Seated, a gay and gallant company
Of lords and ladies, and Auberley in the midst,
And at his side, dark-eyed, dark-haired, a dame,
Who, moving, flashed, be-diamonded like a flower
With April drops—his new-won Spanish bride.
Then Auberley, glancing toward the door, beheld
Richard, on whom awhile he gazed in doubt
As at a ghost ; then knew the face, and cried,
'Seize him !' But Richard, suddenly at the word,
Shutting the door, was gone, and from the house
Hasting, took horse, and through the highways fled
Homeward ; while Auberley, with rage and fear
Maddened, called hastily a serving-man,
His boldest and his worst, and bade him ride
By all the shortest ways until he reached
The highway ; there in secret ambush wait
De Wichehalse's messenger, and with a sure
And speedy bullet stay his headlong course.
This promised faithfully the man, and rode
By all the shortest ways until he reached
The highway ; saw as yet no flying hoofs
Had stamped their hasty crescents in the dust,

JENNIFRED

Then found a thicket by a little brook
That sang beside the way, thick-fringed with blue
Forget-me-nots, which his heel, dismounting, crushed,
Drowning their innocent eyes in the vext stream ;
Then, tying his horse beside a thorn, he crouched
Behind the hedge, with murder in his looks.
There listening long, he heard at length, far off,
Hammering the flinty road, the sound of hoofs
Galloping ; then to his pistol's priming looked
Afresh, and, as the horseman heedless passed,
Fired ; but the horse, frightened by the quick flash,
Reared, and so saved the rider's life, but paid
The forfeit with his own. Then Richard leaped
The hedge, and in the heart of him he deemed
Highwayman plunged his knife, and, stooping, saw
The crest of Auberley ; then found the horse,
And, mounting, rode all night upon his way
Beneath the glimmering stars, and oft beheld
In the thick hedge the semblance of a man
Glaring upon him ; and on the tenth day saw
Dark Exmoor's distant wilds, and gained at noon
Ley's welcome towers ; there in the courtyard found,
Warned of his coming by his horse's hoofs,
De Wichehalse and his household waiting for him,
With Jennifred's pale shadow in the midst,

JENNIFRED

In whose sad presence mute, his trembling lips
Refused their wonted office, loth to wound
Her ears with the harsh news. But she full soon
Read easily his tidings in his face,
And turned and slowly went her way alone
Along her favourite walk, while Richard told
His errand and the issue, Auberley's
Gay marriage, and the deadly ambuscade.
Then Albert, laying his hand upon his sword,
Swore vengeance on false Auberley's proud head
For Jennifred's foul wrongs. But him the knight,
De Wichehalse, suffered not to bind himself,
Saying: 'Remember, son, thy promise made
Long since to Jennifred—never to harm
Thy rival for her sake. But me no vows
Hinder. Myself will to the city hence,
Seek out this caitiff lord, and to the death
Challenge before the Court, slay or be slain,
Ere Jennifred go unavenged. But seek
We her sweet self, nor leave too long alone
The wounded deer to bleed itself to death.'
Then to her bower they went, but found her not;
Called, but heard answer none save the loud roar
Of waves beneath them shocking on the cliff;
Then, home returning, questioned all the house

JENNIFRED

In vain ; in vain searched all the wonted ways
By wood and cliff, and the lone vale that leads
Toward Lynton ; then, when night had blotted all
The verdant lawns, took lights, and searched anew
The woods' dark haunts, and heard the startled owl
Hoot ; while before them many a wild thing leapt
A moment into sight, then, skurrying, fled
As fast far off, and vanished in the gloom
That of sad Jennifred revealed no trace.
Then, hopeless, from the search De Wichehalse turned
Homeward once more ; there, sleepless all the night,
Stood mute, a stony statue of despair,
Beside the hearth ; at morn, sank wearied down
Upon his seat and slept, while Albert went
With the first dawn once more along the cliff,
Hoping 'gainst hope within her bower to find
Asleep, like wearied bird within its nest,
Sweet Jennifred, forgetful of her griefs :
But found not : but instead beheld without,
Upon the wall that fenced the perilous cliff,
A stone as by some recent touch displaced,
And, shuddering, mused : 'What if sad Jennifred,
Crazed with her grief, had ended all her woes
For ever in one wild and desperate leap ?'
Then, hastening back, he to old Richard told

JENNIFRED

The unwelcome thought ; with him anon at ebb
Sought the wide-shelving shore, and found ere long,
Penned in an echoing creek, twixt savage rocks,
The battered form, all sodden with the waves,
Of hapless Jennifred. One hand, fast clenched,
In its firm clasp a locket still enclosed,
That Auberley's false features showed within,
With diamonds costly set, which Albert hurled
With curses on the cliffs. Then gently bore
The twain their dripping burthen to the house,
Where, at their coming, from short slumbers sad
Waking, De Wichehalse, wild with wordless grief,
Fell headlong, swooning, death-like, on the dead,
And groped all night in darkness of the grave.
Then on the morrow, in her mother's tomb,
In Lynton's churchyard on the windy steep,
'Mid tears of neighbours near and far, the last
Sad relic laid of his loved Jennifred.

Then fled De Wichehalse for vengeance to the Court,
Where now nought courtly save the name was left,
By courtezans and queans usurped ; unknown
To these, the knight, no answer gained his suit,
But utmost scorn ; nor in the courts of law
More justice found ; for Justice in those days
Nought recked of perjured knight or maiden wronged.

JENNIFRED

One weapon only now the baffled knight
Could wield—the gage of battle : this he hurled
At his false foe, nor durst that foe, though fain,
The appeal refuse ; therefore to Feversham,
His friend and patron, at the Court repaired
In haste, and showed the challenge, doubting not
That Feversham the encounter would prevent
To save his friend ; so wily abode
The event, and in the field met presently
His wrathful foe. But ere a blow was struck,
Or fierce word hissed across the sparkling steel,
Upon them rushed the myrmidons of the law,
Close ambushed near, who haled the hapless knight
Before a venal judge, who bound him o'er,
Like the loud brawler of some tavern broil,
To keep the peace ; then hustled out of court,
And bade him quit their godly neighbourhood.

So home, once more, a broken man, he rode,
And soon beneath his gateway, silent, passed
At eve beneath a waning autumn moon,
And thought the crescents graven on his shield
Above the carven archway o'er his head
Waned also, while the useless lion ramped
Beside them, that had now no power to kill.



JENNIFRED

But in the courtyard soon, dismounting, met
His nephew's welcome warm, and at his feet
Beheld his hound brisk welcoming as of old,
While in the hall the gathered household bade
More welcomes. Yet for one loved voice his ear
Ached—the hushed voice of gentle Jennifred.

The debauchee who sullied England's crown
With his unkingly orgies from them passed
To give a bigot room. Then sudden rose
Rebellion's serpent-head, and to her side
Summoned the discontented and the wronged,
In James of Monmouth's name, whose banner, wreathed
With Protestant flowers, and blessed with Holy Writ,
De Wichehalse joined with all his house in arms,
Hopeful in battle thus to meet at length,
Perchance, his hated foe ; nor scarce had met
The opposed hosts on Sedgemoor's bloody plain,
Ere 'mid the ranks that foe's proud form he spied.
The sight with thrice their wonted strength infused
His stiffened limbs, and every sinew steeled ;
The light of ancient valour fired his eye ;
The memory of old victories in old fields
Moved him like martial music. His youth's lust
Of fame and name and glory came again,

JENNIFRED

As when in spring the upward-mounting sap
Stirs in some aged oak, whose branches hoar
All in one balmy night of April burst
Suddenly into leaf, and fill the glade
With shadows. Even so De Wichehalse felt
His veins with ardour throb ; his pulses pricked
With joy of battle ; but beyond and thro'
All valour urging him his spirit felt
The spur of vengeance driving him past all bounds
Of safety to himself, until he saw
Before him, in the fight, Lord Auberley
Charging upon him ; for his perjured hand
Shame hindered not the recreant thus to raise
Against the sire of Jennifred. Then cried
De Wichehalse, ' Welcome, perjurer, to thy doom,
Villain and traitor both ! Or thou or I
Leave not this field alive.' Then, lifting up
His arm to strike his last strong stroke, with one
Blow, to the teeth, his daughter's wronger clave,
Then flung his sword far off into the field,
And, gazing down upon his prostrate foe,
Let fall his nerveless arms ; nor ever thence
Had woundless gone, but him his followers seized,
And by his horse's bridle quickly led
Unconscious from the field, and to his home



JENNIFRED

In Devon, guided like a child who sees,
Late journeying, careless, the long dreary miles
Of hill and dale, wild wood, and verdant mead,
So reached at length Ley's mournful mansion's gates ;
Nor longer than a wounded hare is left,
By her relentless foes, upon her form
To pant, hard-breathed, before her last vain flight,
De Wichehalse sat beside his desolate hearth.
There came, one stormy eve, a messenger,
Breathless with haste, bidding, betwixt his gasps,
De Wichehalse fly. 'King James's troops,' he cried,
'Are in the vale ; their errand thou, through all
The courts of Devon and the West proclaimed
Rebel and traitor to our Lord the King,
Thy lands and goods are confiscate, thy life
Forfeit, and soon must pay the penalty,
Unless thou instant hence.' So spake the man,
Scarce heard between the gusts that shook the house,
And thunder of loud waves along the land.
Then Albert bade the servants launch in haste
A boat, and in it sate the aged knight
And his few followers, then, quick leaping in,
Pushed from the land, to wrestle with such waves
As save but seldom break on Devon's shore.
Nor evermore to aftertimes is told

JENNIFRED

Of that sad voyage aught ; but one who heard
Told how, returning up the hollow vale
From sack of Ley, with James' fierce troops, there came
Faint cries from o'er the deep, that sudden, thrice,
Thrilled thro' the darkness, and next morn, beneath
Dark Countisbury's Foreland, stark were seen
Three corpses by the careless waves upthrown,
Last found of that unhappy crew who left,
That stormy night, the lonely shores of Ley.



THE BROKEN VOW.

THE eternal stars are fading
From the dark brow of the night ;
But their keen eyes, still upbraiding,
Look sternly through the light,
And my heart doth ache for the day to break
And hide them from my sight.

For, evermore they're telling
Of an unregarded vow ;
Till memory, tear-compelling,
With anguish wrings my brow ;
And my breath comes quick, and my brain grows sick
For the dead, I know not how.

And I turn to the gliding river ;
But there in its glassy deep
I see with a death-cold shiver
The eyes that shall never sleep :
For they beam with a light that, my prayers despite,
Shall haunt me for ever and ever.

SONNET WRITTEN IN 1870.

LATE over Gallia's vales the dove of peace,
Brooding, from many a leafy bower serene,
Looked tranquil forth upon each sylvan scene,
And saw the land in loveliness increase,
The yellowing corn-field and the whitening fleece ;
And night by night made every peasant deem
He saw her white wings through his slumbers gleam.
Woe worth the day that saw such visions cease !
With horrid shrieks the echoing vales resound :
Peace, deeply wounded, wings her flight afar,
Her blood-stained feathers fluttering to the ground ;
From his dark cavern, roused by the horrid jar,
Fell Famine, with lean eyes, looks fiercely round,
And grizzly Death mounts to his gory car.



TO A FOUNTAIN.

PELLUCID Fount, whose mossy urn retains
The tears of summer wept among the hills,
For thee all night the dropping cloud distils
In amber dews ; or into sparkling rains
Gently dissolves, and sprinkles all the plains.
Unsullied source of murmur-making rills,
What secret spring thy liquid coolness fills ?
Poetic Fancy oft, deep-musing, feigns,
Watching thy bubbles burst, beneath thy well
Some sobbing naiad, prisoned there, she hears ;
Who, weeping alway in her scoop'd cell,
Brimm'd the bright fountain with her ceaseless tears ;
Such sympathies, perchance, in ancient days
Peopled the summer woods with elves and fays.

TO MARY.

MARY ! in vain fond lover e'er would speak
One-half the burning thoughts that fire his breast ;
To passionate hearts 'tis given but to break
With dumb despair ; or, if supremely blest
With heavenly hope, the wildest words are weak
To paint the new-born bliss ; but burning cheek
And quick, communicative glance attest
The secret joy, and, in despair of speech,
A golden silence hangs upon the lip,
Yet serves a deeper eloquence to teach
Than all the arts of oratory can reach,
Or gifted tongue, or perfect scholarship ;
And yet love will have words, though scarce can find
In all its stock and store one to its mind.



MADELINE.

FLOW, gently flow, smooth stream, and pass
Where lies my buried bride ;
By yon green hillock in the grass
Slow waters gently slide.

Drop, softly drop, cold rain, and keep
Her burial ever green ;
Within my heart she sleeps apart,
My loved, lost Madeline.

Blow, gently blow, soft summer breeze,
Her grassy grave around ;
Oh, gently wake the whispering trees
That make a mournful sound.

O summer dews, come softly down,
Shine, stars, upon her pillow ;
My love's asleep, nor hears me weep—
Sad o'er me sighs her willow.

THE AVENUE OF LIMES.

IN the Avenue of Limes I wandered to and fro,
With the moonlight falling round me like a robe of snow :
In the milk-white splendour, fairer than its sheen,
There walked with me and whispered angel-eyed Kathleen :
And her blue eyes melted dream-like into my inmost soul,
And through her soft lips, parted, such euphony there stole
As to my giddy senses made e'en her lightest word
Seem sweeter than the music of any singing-bird.

In the Avenue of Limes, when the red moon was low,
Like a spirit horror-haunted, I wandered to and fro ;
There was a shape of beauty upon the red leaves laid :
But the red leaves they were redder than the red leaves of
the glade,
And whiter than the milk-white moonlight fair was she
Whose white arms waved so wildly for succour unto me.
But the ruffians bound me tightly, for they knew a lover's
hand
Was stronger than the strongest in all their coward band.



THE AVENUE OF LIMES

In the Avenue of Limes I laid me down to die,
With the blood-red leaves beneath me, the burning stars on
high :
And as the darkness deepened, methought how, in my ire,
The red leaves fell around me like flakes of crimson fire ;
And I wished my curse could give them wings to chase the
foe,
To follow them, like scorpions, wherever they should go,
Who in their jealous fury had slain my loved Kathleen,
And made my life as the empty life of those who have not
been.

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT.

He died whom nations wept ! who wept not him ?
When greatness dies the whole world poorer seems ;
Much more when in their prime untimely fall
The great and good. Then every man, methinks,
Doth feel himself impoverished. Death in him
From Britain's crown plucked such a priceless gem
As save but seldom lights proud Empire's brow.
Well might we weep ; in him we each and all
Mourned a friend's loss ; yea, even as though some one
Of our own household band, the best-beloved,
Beneath Time's wave had sunk. Mourned we for him ?
Nay, rather for ourselves ; for round our hearts
Somehow so subtly he had woven a chain,
We knew it not until it snapped ; then, roused,
Awoke at once to knowledge of our wealth—
And poverty. He died whom nations wept !
No hollow drops of fashionable tears,

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

But trickling from the self-same source that weep
A parent's loss. His country's father he,
All worthy of our tears, and worthy such
Remembrance as oblivion's wave harms not.
Not left alone to marble's cold embrace,
Nor graven only on cold memory's urn,
Our all of gratitude, where we can gaze
Self-gratulatory on the sculptured bust
That proves our loyalty, and adorns our town.
Not such as he did gracious Heaven design
To be but models for the sculptor's skill ;
But patterns to be copied in men's lives,
And multiplied in many a human soul.
Thrice happy he who such memorial hath—
An immortality within men's hearts ;
Whose living statues are posterity,
Whose spirit's features, evermore renewed,
Descend from sire to son, from age to age :
To such, though son nor heir their name prolong,
A thousand hearts with filial reverence turn
As to a universal sire. Not all
Perfect he lived, though perfect now, for that
Were higher glory than our mortal state
Allows ; yet perfect in the wish to be,
Prince, husband, father, friend, and prince in all,

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

And unto each as true as this* to thee.
Then, now, farewell ! not soon upon men's lips
Thy name shall cease ; though newer names arise
To dazzle, by Fame's shining shuttles wrought
Upon the unfolding banners of the years ;
Though in the camp, the senate, and the court
These may resound, in many a humble home
ALBERT's shall still be theme of love and praise.

* The above lines were written at the unveiling of the Prince Consort's statue at Tenby, South Wales.

THE DYING WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

AH, dearest, sing that song again,
The song of songs to me ;
Awhile let me forget my pain
In dreams of memory.

Oh, sing to me ! for while you sing,
The joys of happier days
Return on fancy's favoured wing,
And fascinate my gaze.

Then, dearest, sing, for with the notes
Comes back a flood of bliss ;
Once more my weary spirit floats
O'er waves of happiness.

I see again our cottage door,
Just as I used to see
It open stand in days of yore,
As if to welcome me.

I see the honeysuckle twine
About it lovingly ;
I breathe again its breath divine
With inward ecstasy.

THE DYING WIFE TO HER HUSBAND

I see the fields, the wood's dark hem,
The church, my parents' tomb ;
Ah, soon shall I be laid with them
Within its peaceful gloom.

I see once more my mother's smile,
My father, fond and grave,
As, when you asked, he frowned awhile,
Yet blessed us as he gave.

Oh, think not, dearest, I regret
My choice on you should fall ;
Though many came to woo me, yet
I loved you best of all,
And ever more and more must love ;
Nor death can wholly part :
I still will welcome you above,
The first love of my heart.

Then, dearest, sing that song again,
Draw closer to my side ;
Kiss me, nor, dearest one, complain
Heaven claims me for its bride.

I know you'll sing that song no more
When I am laid asleep ;
But when on seraph wings I soar,
Belovèd, do not weep.



ECHOES.

OH, sweet are the magical echoes that bound
From mountain to rock with a musical sound,
And mimic the joyous laugh and the call,
Like voices heard in some empty hall,
Or splash of woodland waterfall,
Or headlong rush of hurrying wave
When the surges lay siege to some lonely cave !

Where dun mountains, sloping, dip down from the skies,
In their lap in the valley a lakelet lies ;
And far away on its farthermost shore,
When at even I rest on my dripping oar,
Gray rocks, with lichens and mosses hoar,
Bare their bold breasts to the wanderer's gaze,
And many a lonely echo strays.

For there, in her cavern's sonorous dark cells,
Sweet Echo, the mirror of sound, ever dwells ;
To my spirit her wizard call is dear,
Trembling along o'er the moonlighted mere,
Silvery sweet, melodiously clear,
Thrilling the ear with a still delight,
Like a rich strain breathed on the balmy night.

ECHOES

See the convent that crowns the dark crest of yon hill :
It has heard them for ages—it hears them still ;
For at eventide there's a silver bell
Peals forth o'er the waters a restful knell
That calleth me back to my empty cell ;
Then I bid the mournful echoes 'Good-bye !'
They murmur me back a faint 'Good-bye !'
I close the dark cloister's ponderous door,
And hear the beautiful echoes no more.



'BE MINE, BELOVED !'

Be mine, beloved ! why longer yet asunder
Should hearts remain, once firmly knit as ours ?
Why yet apart about the world we wander ?
Why thus so lavish of life's fairest hours ?

Be mine, beloved ! ere the cold world can sever,
With idle tongues, two natures that were meant
To be each other's counterpart, for ever :
'Tis mine to woo—be 't thine to yield assent.

Be mine, beloved ! oh that these words could woo thee
To quit the scenes of giddy pomp and fashion,
And be once more the artless maid I knew thee,
When glowed our hearts with youth's first virgin passion.

Be mine, beloved ! as in those moments golden
Spent by our own beloved, blue-bosomed sea ;
Be mine once more, and time, as in those olden
Days, shall still have joys for thee and me !

TO THE WELSH DINGLES.

HAIL, land of my childhood ! hail, fair land of Wales !
How dear to my heart are thy hills and thy vales !
Like the words of a song from a lip that I love,
Like the sound in thy woods of some murmuring dove,
So soft seems each syllable learnt by my tongue
In the land where thy lays, Taliesin, were sung.

Full many a word recollection can find,
By memory's soft music embalmed in the mind ;
But sweetest of all that e'er murmurs to me
The music of youth, as the shell of the sea,
Is the name of thy dells, for a melody mingles
With the thought of the sound of thy wild mountain dingles.

O dearly-loved dingles, how poor is the rhyme
That echoes so faintly thy music sublime !
Oh, wild as the lay of some sky-cleaving bird,
Or a cataract's call through the still midnight heard,
Should the measure be strung that should sing of thy dells—
Of the beauty and awe that form part of their spells.

TO THE WELSH DINGLES

Oh, bear me, my soul, to those dingles again,
Far away from the noise and the trampings of men ;
Where the moan of humanity never is heard,
Nor its ceaseless commotion the stillness has stirred ;
Where creation's deep silence has never been broken,
And the words 'Oh, the tumult !' have never been spoken.

There calmly sits Silence in slumber profound,
That is deepened for aye by the lullaby sound
Of the rippling cascade, till it seems to the ear
'Tis the murmurs of Nature's own self that we hear,
Who talks to herself as she dreams in her sleep,
As though she would tell of the visions that creep
Through her somnolent soul, or the thought that encumbers
Like a nightmare the rest of her magical slumbers.

O dearly-loved dingles, how sweet were the thought,
By kind friends could my body, when lifeless, be brought
To repose 'mid your silence in slumber profound !
Lulled to sleep by yon cataract's musical sound,
'Neath the heather at rest, oh, how tranquil and deep
Should prove the long night of mortality's sleep !



THE OLD YEAR'S DEATH.

(WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN.)

DEEP, soft, and silent everywhere
The snow lay all around ;
And chill and keen was the frosty air,
And frozen seemed every sound.

For the Year was in his dotage now,
And his hours were well-nigh told ;
And fast and thick on his furrowed brow
Gathered the dampness cold.

And it seemed as if Nature, grieving sore
For the old year's closing eyes,
Had spread this carpet before his door
To deaden the loud world's noise.

And she stayed him, still, with wine and ale,
And made him a roaring fire ;
But deathlier still and deathlier pale
Grew the face of the aged sire.



THE OLD YEAR'S DEATH

And he sighed, as he lay, for his summer flowers,
But there was never a blade to be found ;
For the snow lay deep 'mid the empty bowers,
And the frost had sealed the ground.

But she brought him a bunch of the mistletoe,
And a wreath of the ivy green ;
And sprays of fir all feathered with snow,
And sprigs of the holly between ;

And laid them down by the old year's side,
Just on his pillow bare ;
But he saw them not, though his eyes were wide,
Nor the firelight's ruddy glare.

Swiftly the ancient sire grew worse,
And nearer drew to death ;
No patient e'er had a tenderer nurse,
But she could not give him his breath.

And now, as the hours to midnight drew,
A gaunt, dim shape was seen,
That hovered around the old year's bed,
And it held a sickle keen.

THE OLD YEAR'S DEATH

Suddenly broke on the silent night
The sharp, quick strokes of twelve ;
And when the nurse had recovered her fright
There was no one there but herself.

But lo ! as she gazed on the empty bed,
A wondrous sight was there !—
A cherub child lay there instead,
Like a lily smooth and fair.

She took him and nursed him till he grew
Into a stalwart man ;—
Now, here I leave my riddle with you :
Interpret, all who can.

A FAREWELL TO THE OLD YEAR

A SONG, a song for the Year's decease,
A dirge for the Year's decay :
Old Year, oh, may we part in peace,
Since thou must pass away !

I chide thee not for friends who've flown,
Nor yet for pleasures fled ;
For Hope's fair castles overthrown,
Nor Youth's bright blossoms shed.

I bless thee for the bliss thou brought,
For friends who *will not* fly ;
For hours with sunny memories fraught,
And hopes that cannot die.

For, though thou broughtest weal and woe,
We know thy wish was kind ;
Oh, let the evil with thee go,
But leave the good behind !

A FAREWELL TO THE OLD YEAR

Now drearily the day is dying,
The winds they wail aloud ;
While thick and fast the snow is flying
To weave thy spotless shroud.

The nipping air of night is numb,
This night thy last must be ;
The frozen rivulet is dumb,
As it had died with thee.

O New Year ! may you bring us peace,
More perfect than of yore ;
Till sounds of woe and sorrow cease,
And wars lay waste no more.

May Truth unveil her shining face,
And more of grace be given ;
Then, whether joys be more or less,
Earth shall grow more like heaven.

THE NAMELESS GRAVE.

IN a sea-girt cemetery,
Where dark yew and willow wave,
Little Lilian's grandsire, musing,
Stood beside a nameless grave.

At his feet his little grandchild,
Toying with her daisy chain,
Sat and sung upon the greensward,
Knowing nought of care and pain :

Till, her eager face uplifting,
Lighted with some sudden thought
Welling up from childhood's fountains,
On her grandsire's brow she caught

The dark shadow of a sorrow,
Like a cloud upon the sea ;
And the little face grew serious
With a quick, sweet sympathy.

Tenderly the little maiden
Slipped her tiny hand in his,
Drew him gently down beside her,
Kissed him with a winsome kiss.

THE NAMELESS GRAVE

‘Tell me,’ eagerly imploring,
‘Whence that look of sadness came,
That your face o’erclouded, gazing
On this grave without a name ?

‘This is neither aunt’s nor uncle’s,
And little sister Marion sleeps
Under the yew-tree, and the willow
Over blue-eyed Walter weeps.’

Then the old man,—‘Sad and simple,
Maiden, is the tale to tell
Of a luckless fate, and lonely,
That a stranger once befell.’

‘Tell me ! tell me !’ cried the maiden,
Letting fall her daisy chain ;
In her eyes the shadows deepening,
Like full skies that presage rain.

‘It was in the chill December,’
Quoth the old man, ‘years ago,
That the fisherman saw a stranger
O’er the wet beach wandering slow,

‘Gathering of old Ocean’s treasures,—
Shells and seaweeds many-hued,
From deep pool and cavern echoing
Wavelet that his steps pursued.



THE NAMELESS GRAVE

‘ Into many a nook and crevice
Peered he long with eager eyes,
Joyful from each search returning
Laden with some lovelier prize.

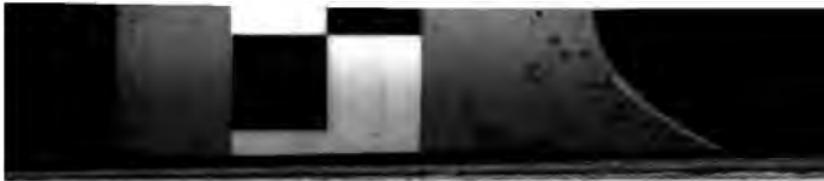
‘ On and on he heedless wandered,
With slow steps that tracked the sand,
Humming low some simple ditty,
Legend of the sea or land.

‘ Marked he not the daylight waning,
Nor the landward-flowing tide ;
Musing only on his treasures,
With a glad and simple pride.

‘ Till before him loomed a headland,
That stretched farther out to sea ;
There beheld the wild sea-cataracts
Beating o'er it boisterously ;

‘ And the waters dashing wildly,
Leaping heavenward in their glee,
Like a thousand fountains flashing,
Were a glorious sight to see.

‘ But the traveller gazing, startled,
Sudden turned with eager haste,
Saw the swift tide flowing landward,
Knew there was no time to waste.



THE NAMELESS GRAVE

‘ Every nerve and sinew straining,
Back he flies along the shore ;
All the hollow deep resounding,
All the echoing rocks responding,
Follow with relentless roar.

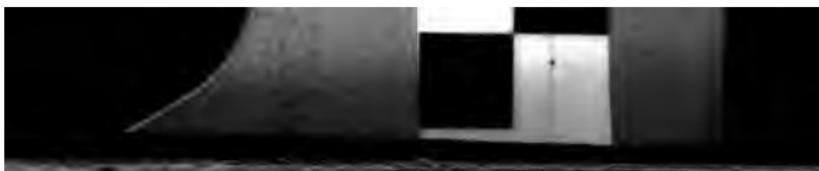
‘ Fast and faster then he hurries,
Breathless, o'er the shining beach,
Hoping still, with wild endeavour,
Ere too late the point to reach.

‘ Nearer on his anxious vision
Now the last huge cliff draws near—
Hark ! low thunder round it surging
Like a knell salutes his ear.

‘ Nearer still, he sees the billows
O'er the huge rocks burst in spray,
Hears the echo of their voices
Down the long coast die away.

‘ Sick at heart, and numb with terror,
In that sound his doom he hears ;
Hears his hapless widow's wailing,
Hears his helpless orphan's tears.

‘ But one last resource is left him—
'Tis to scale the dizzy height
That, far upward, towers above him
In the wan December light.



THE NAMELESS GRAVE

‘Eager, then, with foot and finger
Up the cliff he works his way,
To a rocky ledge above him,
Just beyond the beating spray.

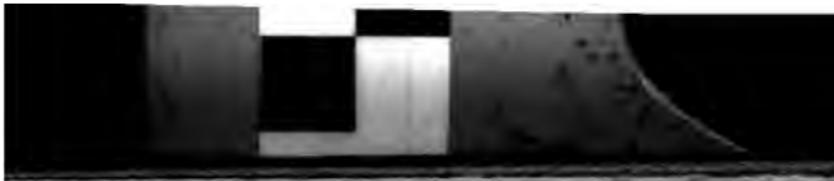
‘Suddenly then his hopes desert him,
For he sees that cliff too bare
E’er for mortal strength to scale it,
Even with fingers of despair.

‘Far above him, and around him,
Lifts one lofty precipice ;
And below him, in the dim light,
The wild waters seethe and hiss.

‘Paint we not the woeful picture
Of his anguish and despair—
Darkness falling, surges calling,
Pallid lips that moved in prayer,

‘While he saw from out the ocean
One by one the stars arise—
Saw the watch-fires of Orion
Burning in the deep-blue skies :

‘Far above him saw Capella
Smiling through her yellow hair ;
And below her Mars, the warrior,
Gleaming with a torch-like glare—



THE NAMELESS GRAVE

‘Saw, ere yet his senses left him—
Saw, or fancied he could see,
Peering round the rock’s dark edges,
Faces loved in infancy ;
‘Till at length, benumbed and frozen
With the keen and wintry air,
Down upon the rock he laid him,
And the fishermen found him there ;
‘Bore him thence, and lowly laid him
Here, where yew and willow wave ;
And the white moon in midwinter
Sleeps on this, his nameless grave.’
Ceased the old man, and, descending,
Turned his homeward steps to wend
Downward to the distant hamlet,
For the day drew near its end;
While behind him, lingering thoughtful,
On the stranger’s resting-place
Little Lilian laid her daisies,
With a sympathetic grace.

WATERWYNCH

(A BAY NEAR TENBY, IN SOUTH WALES).

My will it was to wander one sweet day—
The summer's last and loveliest—on the shore,
Where everything about, above me wore
A subtle charm prelusive of decay.

Dawned never day more heavenly than this,
As in a trance air, earth, and sea were laid,
Lapped in a dream of loveliness, that made
The gazer half forgot all other bliss.

On the smooth shores of Waterwynch the waves
Broke lightly, with a low and lulling chime,
That, like some poet's oft-returning rhyme,
Rang in the hollow ears of echoing caves.

For, like an infant wearied with its play,
That to its nurse's arms doth nestling creep,
All drowsily methought the languid deep
Sought the broad arms of the embracing bay.

On the hot height was scarce a whisper heard,
Save crackle of the gorse's golden fire,
Or lisp of the far wave or, nigher,
The hum of bees that 'mid the heather stirred.



WATERWYNCH

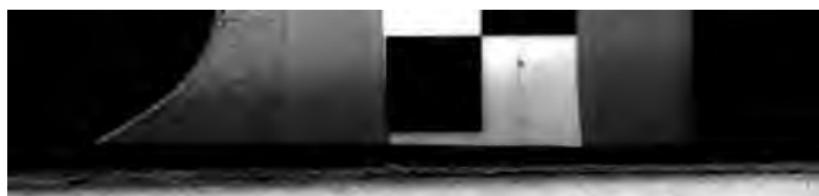
Far out at sea, becalmèd quite and still,
Where not a breath about her rigging crept,
Upon her keel a lonely vessel slept—
A captive to the wild wind's fickle will.

And though full near a liquid league away
The bark was moored, so stainless was the air,
Distinct to view—a vision passing fair—
Her lovely image in the waters lay.

Now in the Atlantic brine, his brow to lave,
Slow sank the sun ; the freshened air grew cool ;
Rich after-glow dyed every glassy pool ;
And a light land-breeze crisped the curling wave.

Then woke, as if from dreams, the distant bark,
Shook her white wings, and with the ebbing tide,
Like ghost, afar did from my vision glide,
And o'er the deep dropt down the silent dark.

Thus passed for ever from this haunted bay—
Haunted with fancies, that from out the sea
Rose mermaid-like in shadowy drapery
Of waves and weeds—the lovely summer day.



SCHOOL DREAMS.

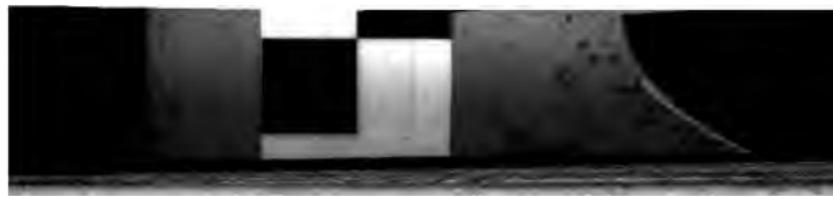
THE sunbeams shone on the schoolroom floor,
In many a golden square,
As they shone, ah me ! in the days of yore
With a light for earth too fair.

They shone on the master's forehead bare
Like the sun on some lonely isle ;
They turned to bright gold his silvery hair,
And mingled themselves in his smile.

The breezes roamed in through the open door,
Sighing like love-lorn maiden,
Turning the leaves of our lesson-books o'er
With their breath with the woodbine laden.

And aloft on a poplar green and high,
With never a book to bore him,
A swallow sang loud to the deep blue sky
That glowed so brightly o'er him.

We saw, as we sat, the squirrel peep
From his hole in the old elm-tree ;
And each sighed to himself, as he saw him leap,
‘Would I were at play like thee !’



SCHOOL DREAMS

We looked and longed till the drowsy lid
Drooped o'er the pictured page ;
And Sleep with her golden key unslid
The doors of our fancy's cage,
And bore us forth on her viewless wings,
In the sunny fields to play,
'Mid a thousand happy living things
That there kept holiday.

Swiftly we passed through the playground gates
With a laugh and a run and a shout ;
And a push or a poke from our merry mates—
A regular schoolboy rout.

Away, away through the waving grass,
Through the ranks of the bending corn,
With never a care for the empty class,
Merry as larks at morn !

Now in the sunshine, now in the shade,
Far over the glebe away ;
Wandering on through some greenwood glade,
As it rang with our roundelay ;

Under the boughs where the ripening nuts
In their milk-white clusters shone ;
Stumbling along o'er the deep cart-ruts,
And falling for very fun.

SCHOOL DREAMS

There were light little feet that followed our track,
And soft little hands that took
Their share of the booty, and paid us back
With a smile and a loving look.

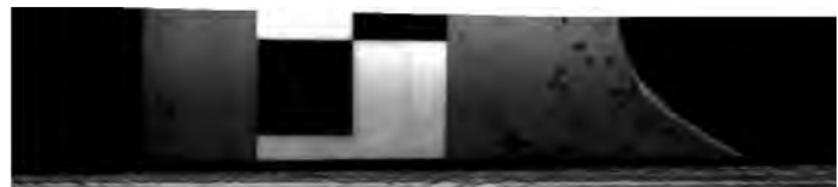
We followed the rivulet's winding side,
As it stole through each cool soft glen ;
Oft pausing to gaze where its dreamy tide
Gave the landscape back again.

We brandished our bows of hazel-wood,
Like yeomen brave ; and Ben
Was our bold Robin Hood, that forester good,
And we were his merry men.

How long we dreamed I cannot pretend
To relate—it's so long ago ;
Nor where our dreams would have found an end,
But I'll tell you all I know.

The master looked up as our comrade told,
And found us all locked in sleep,
And his kind eye smiled, though he tried to scold,
And he called us his 'idle sheep.'

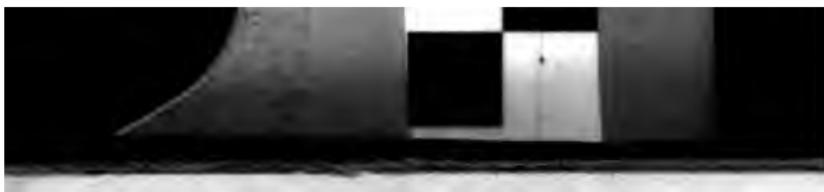
So we turned to our books with a sleepy grace,
But through the dim page there gleamed,
As the landscape had done through the river's face,
The glory of things we had dreamed.



MAY SONG.

'Tis May ! 'tis May ! 'tis May !
To the woodlands, up, away !
 For summer now
 Bedecks the bough
With garlands green and gay ;
And little children say,
Pausing amid their play,
 'Tis May ! 'tis May ! 'tis May !

 'Tis May ! 'tis May ! 'tis May !
Is every songster's lay,
 Which brooks repeat
 In gurgles sweet ;
And men and maidens stray
Where the cool shadows play ;
And wild winds whisper aye,
 'Tis May ! 'tis May ! 'tis May !



TO R. M.

(A BENEDICTION.)

BRIGHT be the skies above thee,
And the flowers beneath thy feet ;
Brighter the eyes that love thee,
And the smile thou joy'st to meet.

Sweet be the lips thou presest,
As the honey of the bee :
The dear one thou caressesst,
A dream of joy be she !

Smooth be thy nightly pillow,
As the white breast of the dove,
Or down upon the willow,
Or lap of her you love.

Blest be thou when thou wakest ;
Blest be thou when thou sleep'st ;
Golden the fruits thou shakest ;
Full-eared the joys thou reap'st.

TO R. M.

Ne'er scorching be thy sunshine,
Nor bitter cold thy showers ;
No clouds obstruct thy moonshine ;
No mildew mar thy flowers.

But not to intoxicate thee
With surfeit of all bliss,
Beware lest joys elate thee
In a world like this.

Welcome each needs-be trouble ;
Grieve not though ills betide ;
There must be many a bubble
Where gallant ship would ride.

Earth holds not any haven
Where storms have never passed ;
But, an' thou be not craven,
Thou shalt find such at last.

TO THE SAME.

(FOR AN ALBUM.)

I.

DEAR FRIEND, forgive me ; really, I scarce know
How best to write
What shall be worthy me and you, although
My heart is full of kindly thoughts for you,
And moves towards you with an instinct true ;
But to indite
According to the rules of rhyme and metre
Is hard, albeit making sweet thoughts sweeter.

2.

But, then, you know it ever is confessed
By men of sense,
The truest thoughts are seldom best expressed,
Fact's harder told than fiction, in the latter
An unmeant lie or two makes little matter.
That's my defence,
And for the rest—I love you as a brother,
Ay, like the very son of my own mother.



TO THE SAME

3.

I pray all happiness that health secures,
And wealth and fame,
And godliness (best blessing), may be yours ;
I wish you sunny skies and a long life,
And when you marry a most loving wife ;
And though my name
From this bright leaflet should with age depart,
Yet leave it graven on the album in your heart.

ELEGY ON A MUSIC-MASTER.

FAREWELL, thou good and gentle,
Who erst, of music's art,
A knowledge rudimental
Didst unto us impart.

Soon into saddest minor
Death did thy song transpose :
But fuller now and finer
In Heaven thy spirit knows.

In Death's most solemn vesture,
Friends, let his corse be drest,
And place in reverent gesture
His baton on his breast.

Unrequiemed though he sleepeth,
Yet Memory o'er his grave
Her tears melodious weepeth,
And chants a mournful stave.



ELEGY ON A MUSIC-MASTER

Step softly and speak lowly
Amid the mouldering urns ;
He now in concert holy
A nobler gamut learns.

In the eternal clime
Of music's sweet reality,
He keeps—who ne'er kept time—
A tuneful immortality.

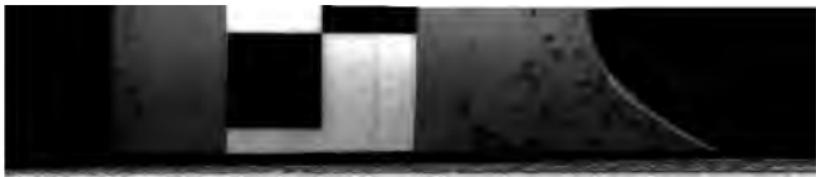


THE CLOUD.

'TWAS summer o'er land and sea,
And summer in my soul ;
The sunshine streamed in its brilliancy,
The green woods gushed with minstrelsy,
And my heart was filled with such ecstasy
As mocked at all control.

For my love was near to me !—
An angel of the earth—
And her dark eyes shone so gloriously,
And her lips moved soft and tunefully
And her laugh rang out melodiously,
Mocking all other mirth.

Oh ! she was so dear to me,
Her love was all my life ;
And she loved with an angel's constancy,
And a woman's deep, strong fervency,
And, oh ! 'twas a rapturous phantasy
That I should call her *wife*.



THE CLOUD

Gaily o'er meadow and lea,
From dawn to evening bright,
We roamed : the flowers smiled gorgeously,
The blue sky glowed resplendently,
But her eyes they shone transcendently
With love's immortal light.

Up a hill's green side climbed we
Together hand in hand ;
Earth smiled before us radiantly,
We gazed at each other tenderly,
And our hearts beat, ah ! so happily,
It seemed enchanted land.

Then a change came suddenly :
The sunshine died away ;
The sky hung dark and loweringly ;
The wind rose wild and fitfully ;
The sea moaned loud and mournfully,
It filled us with dismay.

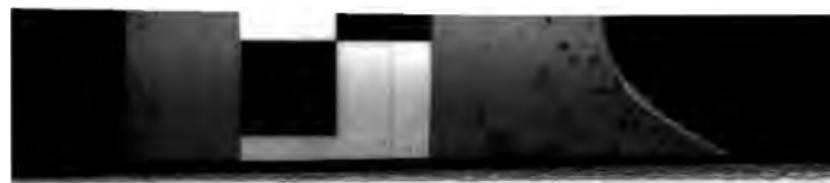
Then there rose up from the sea
A dense and sable cloud ;
As it rose we gazed deploredly,
But upward it soared menacingly,
Till round us it folded relentlessly,
Chill and damp as a shroud.



THE CLOUD

It passed, and left me free :
But she, my life, was fled :
Up to heaven the cloud sailed goldenly,
And, as upward I gazèd wistfully,
Two dazzling feet gleamed transiently
A moment and were hid.

Yes, the cloud is fled ;—ah me !
But its shadow evermore
On my pathway falleth gloomily ;
And I long and sigh unceasingly,
When life shall be ended, as tranquilly
To the same blue heaven to soar.



MEETING FATHER.

DARK lowered the night and dreary,
With shadowy shapes and eerie,
 On me aweary ;
For the way that I was wending
Seemed long and never ending,
 Still ascending.

I thought to meet my father
Ere yet the night should gather,
 Timid rather
Of darkness and things drearful,
And soon, with fancies fearful,
 Grew half tearful.

Doubtless it was silly,
But the darkness seemed so stilly
 And so chilly.
And the wind, a dirge intoning,
Rose o'er the valley, moaning
 Much and groaning.



MEETING FATHER

While, me still more to frighten,
And all my terrors heighten,

It 'gan lighten ;

Then down a dark lane turning,

How greatly grew my yearning

And heart-burning !

Then straight I fell a-praying,

Childhood-like not staying

Doubt's gainsaying :

All my fears confessing

In my prayer, not guessing

Of its blessing.

Till before me gleaming,

Lo ! a bright light streaming,

Softly gleaming.

I, instantly divining

'Twas a glow-worm shining,

Ceased repining.

Nor further need to wander ;

For, hark ! a footstep yonder

Makes me ponder.

' Father ! ' cried I, nearing,

When his answer cheering

Met my hearing.



MEETING FATHER

Soon, from the darkness cold hid,
Me in his arms he folded,
 Though he scolded
Much my foolish action,
With fatherly correction
 And affection.

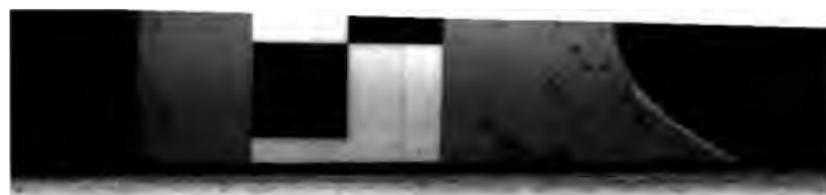
Long years have now departed
Since on that way I started
 Anxious-hearted ;
Yet weary still I'm wending,
Life's pathway aye ascending,
 Heaven tending.

And, oft, the darkness fearing,
A Father's accents cheering
 Meet my hearing.
Soon, in His bosom hiding,
Shall I repose confiding,
Nor fear a father's chiding,
 There abiding.



TO MY CRITIC.

CRITIC, if I have called thee e'er
Ill names, 'twas ever half in fear,
That so I might discount betimes
Th' expected censure on my rhymes :
Yet, ne'ertheless, I charge thee, spare
No blot, for favour or for fear ;
Yet, if thou bless, I'll say thou'rt wise ;
If blame, that thou art over-nice :
But praise or blame, or bless or ban,
I know thou'rt after all but man.
And what's a poet ? Something more
Or less, as may befall—a bore
Who gives us, ofttimes, sound for sense,
And strives by rhyme to recompense
For lack of reason. Yet I know
If I have something writ or so,
That's worthy, spite of critic's ban,
'Twill live ; if ill, do all they can,
The kindest critics could not save
My worthless lines from Lethe's wave.
Be this my task,—to give my best,
And leave to Time's sure touch the rest.



SUMMER DAYS.

SUMMER days : let others praise
Fickle Springtide's wanton ways ;
Autumn's boons let farmers bless,
Summer's joys will I confess.

Summer skies : not true-love's eyes
Deeper glow, nor violet's dyes ;
Bliss of their deep blue divine
Warms the frozen heart like wine.

Summer bowers, fair with flowers,
Show like rainbows after showers ;
While to their rich rose is lent
Odours rare of ravishment.

Summer songs : to them belongs
Rapture of sweet-throated throngs,
That, from lovely May till June,
Make their lives one long sweet tune.



SUMMER DAYS

Summer dreams : what glorious gleams
Gild for us fair fields and streams,
When, with sunlight far and wide,
The whole world stands glorified !

Summer fair beyond compare,
Praise we then with paens rare :
Hail, sweet summer ! who shall render
Descant that befits thy splendour ?



AUTUMN SONG.

THE rose is dead ; the bloom is shed ;
The lily in its grave is laid ;
For summer shine 'tis autumn shade,
And winds are wailing overhead.

The dazzling summer days are done,
Their pleasant hours have passed away ;
Thick mists are mantling, cold and gray,
And shadows creep across the sun.

We feel no more his fervid ire
When all the swimming landscape swoons,
The languor of the lazy noons,
Or nights of fever and of fire.

When golden hills begin to glow,
Up, huntsmen ! wake the merry morn ;
With music of your mellow horn
Let woods and winding vales o'erflow.

Beneath the mellow autumn moon,
White sleep the mists on wold and lea ;
The vale doth seem a silver sea,
And vapours dim night's clouded noon.

The rose is dead ; the leaf is shed ;
The earth lies shivering in its shroud ;
The orphan winds are wailing loud,
And skies are weeping overhead.



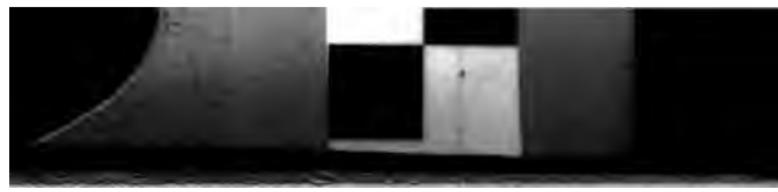
NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER's days are dull and drear,
November's nights are numb and chill ;
When hides in clouds the hooded hill,
And withered woods are wan and sere.

With clinging mists the heights are crowned,
Loud torrents shake the gloomy glen ;
Wild lights are winking o'er the fen,
And the dull day in floods is drowned.

The bee has hummed himself to sleep,
With faded blossoms covered o'er ;
His murmur-music wakes no more,
By dimpled dell or thymy steep.

The butterfly has breathed his last ;
Unseen he closed his quivering wings,
Where o'er his bier sweet robin sings
His requiem 'mid the biting blast.



NOVEMBER

The glow-worm now has quenched her light,
And gone to bed ; in bush and brake
Shrill grasshoppers have ceased to make
Loud music all the live-long night.

Even Phœbus slacks his wonted force,
Nor holds as erst his lamp on high ;
'Cuckoo' 's a half-forgotten cry,
And larks are dumb and linnets hoarse.

All Nature deathward seems to tend,
And thus unto my heart doth break
The tidings self would never seek,
'Thou, mortal, too, must meet thy end.'



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM.

LATE, basking on a flowery bank
Beside a murmuring stream,
My ears its happy music drank,
Lapped fast in love's sweet dream.

The summer sun far overhead,
Like heaven's own glorious eye,
Shone down upon my grassy bed
From June's unclouded sky.

Soft odours, like fair Nature's soul,
Filled every passing wind,
And from their wings a vision stole
Like music o'er my mind.

I dreamed it was the olden days,
When rustic men and maids
Saw fairy forms at vesper's chime
Trip through the darkening glades.



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

Each pebbly brook, each mountain glen,
Each legendary oak,
Was in those days to simple men
The haunt of fairy folk.

Myself I thought an elfin gay,
The genius of a wood,
Whose depths defied the light of day
To pierce their solitude.

All day within a cowslip cup
I lay with folded wings,
Until the round red moon was up
And lit the fairy-rings.

And then, with sprightly elves and fays,
The fairy waltz I danced ;
My light feet trod the giddy maze,
And in the moonlight glanced.

For food I sipped the nectared flowers
Or drank their luscious dew ;
And thus the fairy-footed hours
Like wingèd arrows flew.

But soon of this gay life I tired,
And all my elf-mates spurned ;
My heart, by some strange yearning fired,
To roam the wide world burned.



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

I longed its wonders to explore,
My azure wings to spread
Where, on some strange enchanted shore,
New flowers their perfume shed.

My fairy home I bade farewell,
I kissed my favourite flowers ;
A low wind moaned adown the dell
And shook the forest bowers.

I fled across the ocean's breast,
Whereon a thousand isles,
In richest summer verdure dressed,
Diffused perpetual smiles ;

There, green as emeralds, 'mid the foam
Of azure seas at rest,
Bask 'neath the blue unclouded dome
Fair Islands of the Blest ;

Or where beyond the western main
The golden suns go down ;
Where mighty rivers cleave the plain,
And giant mountains frown ;

Where India's sons with servile mien
Adore their hideous gods ;
Where quaint pagodas grace the scene,
And the tall bamboo nods.



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

But not a land, however blest,
Could chain my spirit long ;
The yearning that my soul possessed
Grew day by day less strong.

My fairy home, my forest gay,
My heart thought pleasant then ;
I nearly sighed myself away
To visit them again.

So homeward, like a wandering bird,
My eager flight I took ;
And all the way methought I heard
My little babbling brook.

With silvery-sweet reproachful voice
It seemed to lure me home ;
Ah, ne'er again fastidious choice
Should lure me thence to roam.

Thrice three revolving days were past,
I gained my native wood ;
Beside my little brook at last
With gushing eyes I stood.

All, all was changed in bower and glade ;
My fairy mates were fled,
My forest home all disarrayed,
My favourite flowers were dead.

A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

I sank upon a cowslip leaf
Till the cold moon arose
And saw my tears of bitter grief,
My dark and hopeless woes.

At length it sank ; the cheering morn
Shed sunshine o'er the earth ;
I turned, and left the bowers forlorn,
The same that gave me birth.

I fled to where, mid grassy hills,
A glassy lakelet shone,
The product of a thousand rills
That sparkled in the sun.

Beside a fountain's splashy side
My tired form I laid,
When soon a violet I espied
Within the woodland's shade.

I went and lay beneath it there,
And as it o'er me leant,
Its petals blue, divinely fair,
Eclipsed the firmament.

And in that bright and blissful hour
Its beauty won my love ;
I prayed that I might be a flower,
Nor ever from it move.



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

The kind fates granted my request ;
A graceful plant I grew—
A lily with a snowy vest,
And bells that dripped with dew.

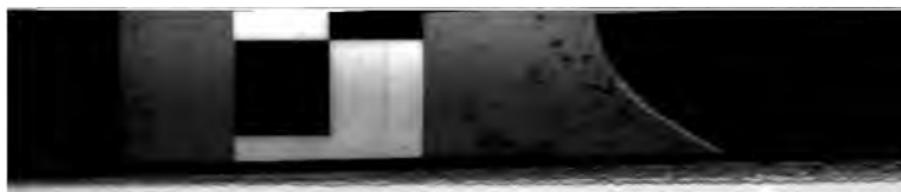
And thus we flourished side by side,
My violet and I ;
Around the mountain breezes sighed,
As they went lightly by.

Like voices from some far-off sphere,
They murmured past, it seemed,
Whispering such music as the ear
Of mortal never dreamed.

The stars above the darkening hill
All silently did rise,
And through the night mist white and chill
Looked out from paradise.

My violet trembled with the night,
Its head to mine was bent ;
I gently clasped its form so light,
And loving o'er it leant.

I vowed I'd never from it part,
And fondly murmuring ' Mine !'
A voice stole from its dewy heart,
And, whispering, answered ' Thine !'



A SUMMER DAY-DREAM

Then sudden in my dream methought
There burst a hurtling storm,
That woke me, with much wonder fraught,
To see my Mary's form.

A pitcher on her arm she poised,
Fresh-brimmed with water pure ;
In her glad eyes my soul rejoiced
With steadfast joy and sure.

Then marked I how the fingers fair
Of one small hand were wet,
While down my face, and down my hair,
Small drops were trickling yet.

Anon her lovely lips disclosed,
Mid laughter low and sweet,
How, past the place where I reposed
Hasting with nimble feet,

She saw ; and from her pitcher shook
Some drops upon my face,
Well pleased, I ween, my waking look
Of wonderment to trace.

Uppringing from my flowery bed,
I with her homeward went,
And told my dream, nor left unsaid
What more than dream was meant.

TO A LILY

My earnest suit kind answer found,
And ere her home was won,
My love's first maiden kiss had crowned
My wooing long begun.



TO A LILY.

FLOWER, long since in Eden's bowers,
Fairest found of mortal flowers,
Sweetest songs are sung of thee,
Lily, lady of the lea !

Pure as snows that wrap the mountains,
Pure as drops in diamond fountains,
Mortal maiden pure like thee
Lives not, lady of the lea.

How, unspotted from thy birth,
Thou dost grow from common earth
So fair is heavenliest mystery,
Lily, lady of the lea.

TO A LILY

Flaunting flowers of deeper dye
Woo the wanton butterfly ;
Thou art named the bride of the bee,
Lily, lady of the lea.

Pansy's but a beauty painted,
Thou, methinks, art maiden sainted,
Mid thy leaves' green privacy
Cloistered, lady of the lea.

Amorous winds that woo the rose
Pant not round thy crown of snows
Odours of such sanctity
Guard thee, lady of the lea.

Beauty in immortal dower
Is thine heritage, sweet flower.
Teach me thy sweet purity,
Lily, lady of the lea.



THE GROWTH OF LOVE.

My manhood's morn had lost its glow
Ere first 'twas mine to feel
The enchanted waves of love's sweet woe
O'er all my senses steal.

For, save who nursed me on her knees.
No fair my heart could bind,
Unlearned in love's sweet witcheries,
And ways of womankind.

And long I laughed at lovers' woes,
And smiled at lovers' smart,
While others thrilled with secret throes
Or groaned 'neath Cupid's dart.

Yet far through many a foreign clime
My travelled feet had trod,
Ere once again in manhood's prime
I pressed my native sod,



THE GROWTH OF LOVE

With the sweet thought to end my days
Within my parents' cot,
And there forego my wandering ways
For labour's settled lot.

Where Dartmoor's rugged wild uprears,
That lot by heaven was cast ;
And there, returned, the tranquil years
In peaceful toil flew past.

Then, lent our humble hearth to grace,
A lowly maiden came,
Whose mother to our mother's race
Some tie of blood could claim.

An early-orphaned maid, yet gay,
With measured gayness she,
A woodland nymph, fresh as the May,
Was little Mary Lee.

The simple, earnest face at first
Discovered nothing rare ;
No dazzling charms upon me burst ;
I oft had seen more fair.

I only marked that when she smiled
It seemed to please me more,
Like roses of the woodland wild
With sunbeams gilded o'er.



THE GROWTH OF LOVE

And when, in gentle tones and low,
She softly breathed my name,
I thought it sounded sweeter so,
And wished it aye the same.

And when her gentle soul was stirred,
Or filled her deep blue eyes
With tears for sorrows she had heard,
Or beamed with pleased surprise,
Or laughed at some more mirthful tale,
I better liked to see,
Upturned beneath the moonlight pale,
The face of Mary Lee.

And when, beneath those softening rays,
I found the power was mine
To wake that fixed and fervent gaze,
The tear, the smile divine,
I oft the pleasing power would try,
Scarce conscious of the act,
But noting in her beaming eye
The beautiful effect.

And oft I'd tell her stirring tales
Of wondrous lands afar,
Of horrors wrought by gloomy gales
Or desolating war ;

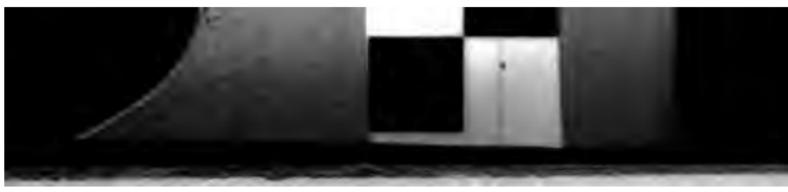


THE GROWTH OF LOVE

Or moved her gentle soul to tears
With some more tender strain,
Of lovers' hopes and lovers' fears,
From minstrels' legends ta'en ;

Till, smitten with her outward grace,
And earnest eyes' deep blue,
I looked beneath the lovely face,
And found a heart as true.

Then soon, to calm her bosom's swell,
This sweet conviction stole,—
Ere yet I prized her beauty's spell,
I loved her guileless soul.



THE BROOKLET.

Oh, brooklet, babbling brooklet,
I tell to you my woe,
As oft my girlish gladness
In summers long ago.

Summers when you saw me,
Nevermore shall see,
Through the green woods glancing
Like your waters—free ;

Careless of all comers,
Of a hundred minds ;
Haunted by strange whispers
Of the wooing winds.

Hour by hour I've lingered
On your grassy brink,
Gazing at the thirsty
Bees that came to drink ;



THE BROOKLET

Or silver-throated swallows,
That in the noontide glow,
Like wingèd arrows darted
Past me to and fro ;

Green leaves all around me,
Bluebells at my feet ;
Wild birds o'er me warbling
Their love-ditties sweet.

The very stones seemed singing
In your pebbly bed ;
I heard their dreamy voices,
But knew not what they said.

I drew one from the water ;
But, ah ! it sang no more :
I flung it back, and heard it
Singing as before.

Once there came a footfall
Made my wild blood dance ;
His shadow dusked the lilies—
Oh ! was it fate or chance ?

He paused ; he gazed—O river !
Not thy waters blue,
When most of heaven they mirror,
Might shame his eyes' deep hue.



THE BROOKLET

He spoke—I knew no answer ;
His voice—I tell thee true—
Seemed sweeter than thy music ;
It thrilled me through and through.

He knelt among the lilies ;
He seized my trembling hand ;
His face to mine uplifted—
The lordliest in the land.

‘ O love ! by tower and city
I’ve sought thee far and wide,
Since ‘neath the church porch meeting,
That fair All-Hallows-tide.

‘ O love ! since then your image
Hath been my guiding star
To lure me from the mansions
Where fashion’s votaries are.

‘ O love ! O star ! O maiden !
Let thy beauteous eyes,
For thy lips replying,
Bid me happy rise.’

Sweet were his words, O brooklet
I listened and I loved ;
As by some mystic music,
My heart was in me moved.



THE BROOKLET

And there and thus he wooed me,

And there and thus he won ;

Still bluer beamed the heavens,

Still brighter shone the sun.

There came a mystic radiance

The woods and waters o'er ;

And aye methought thy music

Seemed sweeter than before.

He went and came : brief summer

Soon into autumn wore,

And autumn into winter.

He went, and came—no more.

No more, O faithless lover !

No more, O false as fair !

No more ! O perjured brooklet,

That didst his treachery share.

I hate you and your music,

As false as is your song,

That still did seem to echo

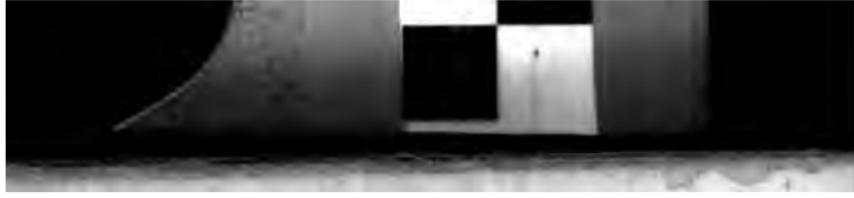
His smooth and perjured tongue.

And yet I love thee, brooklet,

And aye must hold thee dear :

For part of him thou seemest,

Who kissed and clasped me here ;



THE BROOKLET

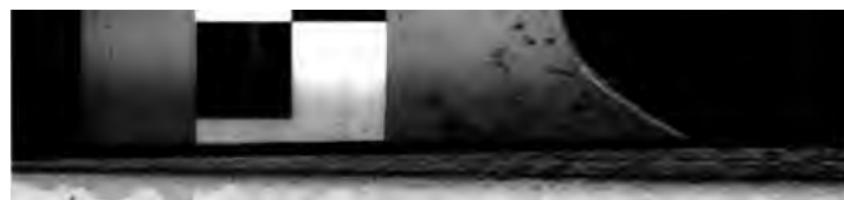
Who vowed and fled. O brooklet !
O heavens ! why reels my brain ?
'Who vowed and kept'—who answers ?
It is his voice again !

O brooklet, babbling brooklet,
That into music break'st,
No more I hold thee perjured,
Who in his truth partak'st.

Once more the stones seem singing
Within your pebbly bed ;
And now methinks they echo
The very words he said :

'Who vowed and kept, nor faltered.
Though fate did sore withstand,
By press-gangs rudely sundered,
True still by sea and land.'

O brooklet, laughing brooklet,
Now all my joys you know,
As once my girlish gladness
In summers long ago.

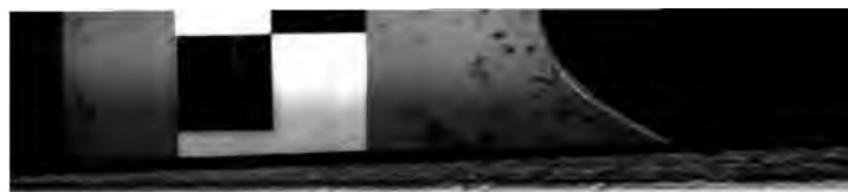


TO PATRICIA.

OH, why so far above my lowly sphere
Hath fortune placed thee, yet withal so near ?
Almost within the circle of my bliss,
And yet irrevocably apart as this
Wild weed that blooms outside my garden-rail
From the gay flowers within, and by as frail
A barrier kept off. Oh, why just set
Upon the horizon of my hopes, and yet
As hopelessly far off as is the east
From the bright west, or thou pale moon, that seest
My nightly vigils, from this earth so dull,
Yet 'neath thy rays so mildly beautiful ?
Oh, why within a frame so rude as mine
Lodges a soul so wondrous like to thine ?
For if not such, why longs it thus for thee
With this deep quenchless love's strong agony ?
Had I ne'er seen thee, or with duller eyes
That had not scanned the hidden mysteries

TO PATRICIA

Of thy sweet soul as with an angel's ken
My tranquil life were still unbroken then.
And yet but once—once only have I seen
Thee with these eyes ; but, oh ! what dreams have
been
Incessant round me by thy memory nursed
Since that ill-fated day I saw thee first !
I saw thee once : but evermore mine eyes
Thine image have retained. I see thee rise
Before me like the violet-tinted haze,
Haunting the vision from the hot sun's blaze.
I see thy features in each changing grace
That beauteous plays o'er Nature's beaming face.
Thou stand'st before me, with thy radiant smile,
Amid life's desert sea a golden isle ;
While I, far off upon the heaving blue,
Am doomed the wished-for haven but to view.
I saw thee once : but of that vision fair
How may I paint the perfect picture rare ?
Within thy form's ethereal-moulded shrine
How glowed the fire of thy pure soul divine !
How shone thine inner beauties in thy face,
As when a lamp within a marble vase
Through the soft urn a mellow light doth pour.
And with a flood of glory brims it o'er.



TO PATRICIA

As through some cloud the silver moon is seen,
So through thine earthly garb thy soul serene
Looked forth. And yet (thought scarce conceivable !)
What stupid crowds within thy presence dwell,
Who catch from thee no bright delirious spell ;
While I, who deem thee almost angel, seek
In vain one moment's golden space to speak
The burning thoughts that scorch my inmost heart,
And fill my brain with their incessant smart !
Oh ! I have watched beneath the burning stars
To muse on thee, till on their jewelled cars
They seemed to close their heavy eyes in sleep,
Or dawn hath chased them down the empyrean steep.
Yet still my eyes their sleepless vigils kept,
As though 'twere joy to wake the while thou slept,
And but to dream I watched thy slumbers mild
As some fond mother doth an absent child.
Thus have I seen the blushing dawn arise
And steep in golden hues the orient skies ;
Have seen the glowing west those tints reflect,
As though another dawn its skies had decked ;
And thought how sweet a type of mutual love
That imaged dawn so heavenly fair did prove.
Thou art mine east, and ever as the morn
Renews the hour this quenchless love was born,

TO PATRICIA

I turn me to the skies with whispered prayer :
'When morns have ceased may I behold thee there !'
Thou art my world's bright sun : what though the shade
Thy absence flings be all the sign displayed
To tell me that thou shin'st ; have I not learned,
And with a lifelong pang the secret earned,
How worthily to love thee, that at last,
When all that clogs my fleshly frame is past,
With thy pure spirit my freed soul as pure
May commune, from all mists of doubt secure ;
That I, who now as some resplendent star,
Not to be loved, but worshipped from afar,
Regarding thee, hereafter may attain
Thy blest society, my heaven, to gain ;
Floating, with thee twin-orb'd, 'mid worlds of light
That know no lapse of love, or death's eternal night ?



TO AMANDA.

WHO loveth thee loves not for outward charms
That make most women beautiful ; for these
To thee were sparsely given, lest they should make
Men love thee rather for thy outward looks
Than the surpassing beauty of thy soul.
Thus graced, perchance, ere this some worthless wight,
Asking no more than outward loveliness,
Nor fitted finer beauties to discern,
Had linked his lot to thine. As ill to wed
Some warbler of the dawn to eyeless mole,
Or mate with crawling worm the butterfly.
As guilty he who, for some selfish end,
Cages a heavenly spirit with his own.
Nature to thee, as to her favoured bird,
Sweet Philomel, hath dealt the homely form
(O word most meet for thee, home's essence fair !)
Wins not the eye ; yet in thy heavenly voice
Hath more than made, methinks, the omission up.

TO AMANDA

When sweetest words, by harsher voices breathed,
Have failed, ever at their furthest reach to sound
The deeps that lie above humanity,
Thy earnest tones with such pure love were fraught
They plumbed the waves, and 'gainst the hidden rock
Of adamantine struck so thrillingly
They woke unwonted echoes in the soul.
For oft when music melts the heart 'tis not
Alone the sweetness of the notes that charms,
As of the chord vibrating to the sound.
Hence, oft a word that in itself perchance
No music hath, on some melodious string
Striking, within us, fills us with sweet sounds.
And thine the calm gray eye, yet more like heaven
Than shames the violet or midsummer skies ;
Nor wants thy face aught of enchanting wiles
To gild thy thoughts' sweet beauty, or to hide.
What gains the sunshine though its lucent beams
Through some rich-stained cathedral windows fall
Upon the pavèd aisle in gorgeous hues ?
Oh, sweeter far the sunset's golden ray,
Filtered through evening's pure translucent skies,
That floods the quiet vale with rosy light,
Or haply steeping the illumined clouds
In crimson hues ! 'Tis not the cloud, I ween,



TO AMANDA

That dyes the ray, but ray that gilds the cloud.
No other need thy heavenly nature hath
To be beloved, than hearts to apprehend—
Though that be rare—thy purity and truth.
‘Hath she no faults?’ I hear one, envious, ask.
I answer, ‘Wears not ev’n the lily oft
Some muddy stain upon its vesture pure?
Some sooty flakes may virgin snows defile,
Some speck of dust the very dewdrops bear;
And in the dazzling sunbeams dwell, unseen
Save mid surrounding light, dark motes of death.
Let Pharisees their vesture stainless vaunt,
While heirs of glory mourn their garments soiled.
God shall provide a raiment for His own
Shall to the all-seeing Eye no blemish show.
To Him thy faults meanwhile, dear maid, I leave.

LINES TO LYNTON.

EAST or west, to my thinking, Old England's the queen,
And first of all lands under heaven ;
And Devon's the glory of England, I ween,
And Lynton the pride of Devon.

For search where you will, from John o' Groat's to
Land's End,
From wild Wales to the rich weald of Kent,
If a month or six weeks of leisure you'd spend,
On health or enjoyment intent,

Not keener nor sweeter of either you'll find
Than mid valleys and moorlands of Devon ;
Where, in deep ferny dells and rich combes the shy hind
Makes her covert at morn or at even.

Like an eagle aloft on her nest sitting proudly,
Lovely Lynton looks forth o'er the sea ;
And lists the wild waves at her feet singing loudly,
And the Lyn rolling down from the lea.

LINES TO LYNTON

On the boulder-strown beach, fifty fathoms beneath her,
Lies Lynmouth, her sister, as sweet ;
While the sea-winds sing o'er her, and the sea-mists
enwreathe her
Where the blue waves and brown waters meet,

And still, to my thinking, Old England's the queen,
And first of all lands under heaven ;
And Devon's the glory of England, I ween,
And Lynton the glory of Devon.



IMPROPTU LINES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM
OF THE SHIP INN, PORLOCK.

NOVEMBER, 1881.

GOOD Ship that want'st not wind or tide,
But safe at anchor here dost ride
 In Porlock's tranquil dale,
May never storm thy timbers wreck,
Nor waves of sorrow sweep thy deck,
 Nor perverse winds prevail,
Thy passengers, life's voyage past,
To keep from fairer port at last ;
 When gallant crew
 And captain true
In Heaven's blue waters strike their sail,
Fearing no more life's changeful gale.

A TENNYSONIAN ODE.

O bud and blossom, blade and leaf,
That own fair Nature as your queen,
In you her lightest touch is seen ;
In me 'tis hid like darkest grief.

For nought of blossom or of bud
With fragrance fraught can I unfold ;
Nor can it by my tongue be told
What's felt but blindly in the blood ;

Or breathes through throbbing heart and brain
A warmth and freshness like the Spring,
Which, though I cannot choose but sing,
With sweeter music mocks my strain.

Yet hope forecasts a happier time,
When these sensations which I feel
Like wine through my quick pulses steal,
Shall richer utterance find than rhyme.



A TENNYSONIAN ODE

When love of some more human thing
Shall bathe my soul like morning dew,
And sweet emotions ever new
Shall fill my pulses like the Spring.

Then fair on that diviner morn
In married hearts the flowers shall blow,
And richer fragrance round them throw
Than e'er from baser nature born.

For still, methinks, the meanest heart,
Where love of aught that's human grows,
Far richer is than any rose,
And heavenlier odours doth impart.



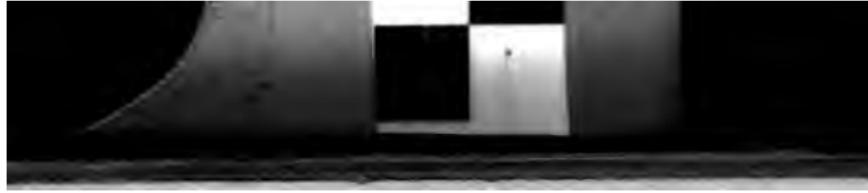
THE EDDYSTONE.

WRITTEN IN 1882.

THREE leagues or more from Devon's shore,
Towards the noontide sun,
On a lonely rock the surges shock ;
And the mighty sea makes moan
The livelong night in the blessed light
That streams from the Eddystone.

East and west, o'er the broad sea's breast,
The gallant ships go past ;
With dipping prow, like courtier, low,
Each stoops her stately mast ;
And the 'Homeward Bound' makes Plymouth Sound
By its welcome light at last.

Come maids, come men, who list to ken
How first above the wave
Was raised the tower, from tempest's power
And angry seas to save,
By the blessed light of its warning bright,
The lives of mariners brave.



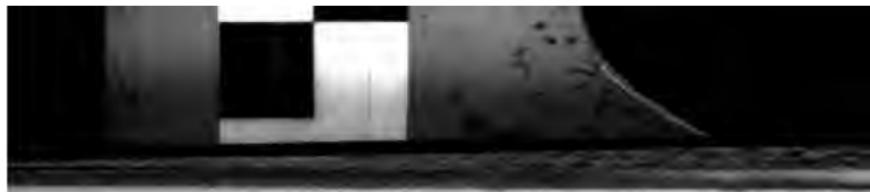
THE EDDYSTONE

WINSTANLEY first—'sore him none durst
The hopeless task essay—
With desperate dint, that knew no stint,
Amid the salt sea-spray,
From tide to tide, his men beside,
Did labour many a day.

For his soul it irked to know there lurked
Those leaping green seas under,
Like a murderous thief, the treacherous reef
That oft had torn asunder
Some vessel's side, that the felon tide
Her costly freight might plunder.

And he sighed and he wept for the men who slept
Fast, fast by their native land,
'Who died, ah me ! with none,' said he,
'To take 'em by the hand,
Nor children dear their pains to cheer,
Or by their side to stand.'

And aloud he cried, 'By Him who died
On Cross of Calvary,
To no other end my wealth I'll spend'
(A mercer rich was he)
'Till on the rock that doth us mock
A lighthouse I may see.'



THE EDDYSTONE

And it seemed him long ere the thing was done —

 But by God's good grace at last
On the treacherous rock that did them mock
 The stately tower stood fast,
And its warning wide o'er the raging tide
 For many a league did cast.

Then the mercer bold his arms did fold
 Full proudly on his breast,
As he watched afar, like a guiding star,
 O'er the wild waves' topmost crest,
The steadfast beam whose warning gleam
 His skill to all confessed.

Then some did shake their heads, and spake
 Of storm ; but loud laughed he.
' Come the very worst that ever burst,
 Or mariner did see,
No otherwhere but in yon tower there
 May I that moment be.'

And his wish was heard to the very word
 (To boast it is not well),
For a hurricane came o'er the main
 One night, as people tell,
And smote with power WINSTANLEY'S tower
 While he therein did dwell.



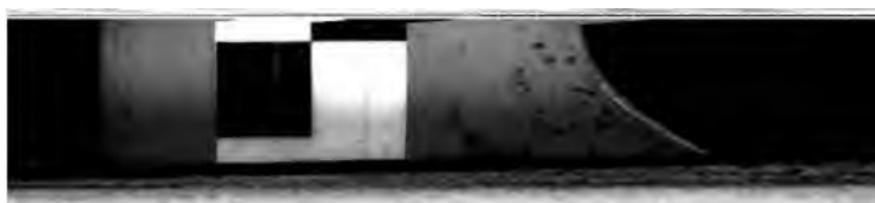
THE EDDYSTONE

Nor e'er before, o'er sea or shore,
Such fearful storm did sweep ;
For thousands then of living men
Went down into the deep :
And on wold and plain, by the fierce wind slain
By thousands lay the sheep.

And the stately trees, that swayed in the breeze
Like anchored ships at even,
At break of day by thousands lay,
With their steadfast roots upriven ;
While many a bark o'er the waters dark
All the dreadful night was driven.

In their very bed were stricken dead
A bishop and his wife ;
And thousands more on river shore
By floods did lose their life ;
While all the air with dreadful glare
Of meteors strange was rife.

Nor from that hour of WINSTANLEY's tower
Was ever more aught seen
Save a broken chain, that did fast remain
Two jagged rocks between,
The place to mark to venturous bark
Where it but late had been.



THE EDDYSTONE

And a curious thing the muse doth sing :—

A model of this same tower
Of WINSTANLEY, that at Littlebury,
Two hundred miles and more
Away, was kept, that night was swept
In fragments to the floor.

Next RUDYERD brave 'mid the restless wave

Once more the task essayed.
Of seasoned wood, both stout and good,
Foundation firm he made,
And many a ton of Cornish stone
Thereon for ballast laid.

Then tier by tier did he uprear
His tower of timbers stout,
That far and wide on every side,
Above the billowy rout,
For many a year, still bright and clear,
Its rays shed round about.

But, alas, proud man ! how vain the plan
That oft we most admire !
The tower did brave both wind and wave
A foe than these more dire
Did overtake, when fierce outbrake
The flash of sudden fire.

THE EDDYSTONE

Like demon caged round the lantern raged
The flame—as oft it floats
O'er vessel fair, while all the air
Is thick with burning motes,
While a molten shower of lead did pour
Down the hapless keepers' throats.

From Cawsand Bay at dawn of day
The fishermen came, and found
In a rocky cave, 'twixt wind and wave,
The three, by the spray half drowned ;
While five long days the burning blaze
Lit up the waters round.

To the rescue then that 'man of men,'
Renownèd SMEATON, came,
And he reared not alone o'er the treacherous stone
A tower, but a lofty name—
Which night by night his beacon bright
Flashed many a league in flame.

From his native oak the stem he took,
And he reared a stately tree
Of granite gray, that best might stay
The stress of angry sea,
Which steadfast proved, by storms unmoved,
For sixscore years and three.



THE EDDYSTONE

And still had stood firm mid the flood,
Untouched by tempest's ire,
But a feller foe there lurked below
Than wind or raging fire,
Where 'neath the rock the surges' shock
Worked hourly ruin dire.

Now prompt to save from billowy grave
Time's masterpiece be it thine,
O ancient town, of fair renown, *
That hear'st the rolling brine,
Say, If not *there*, some elsewhere
It shall not cease to shine.

For burning shame would brand the name
Of England to all time,
f the tower that stood firm midst the flood
For sixscore years sublime,
Beneath the wave should find a grave,
And perish through our crime.

Not so ! not so ! on the windy Hoe,
Like a weather-beaten tar,
Who quits no more his native shore,
Let it watch o'er the waves, while afar
To its nightly gleam a mightier beam
Answers, like star to star !

* Plymouth.

THE EDDYSTONE

Now DOUGLASS fain renown would gain
With EDMOND, partners meet
Henceforth to be of the noble three
Who erst the Rock did cheat
Of its hapless prey, and taught the way
Proud breakers to defeat.

Long lasting fame attend their name
In honour's roll recorded ;
And worthy meed to noble deed
Be as of old awarded ;
Nor thou, fair Tower, in this proud hour
By bard be unregarded !

Oh, brightly shine above the brine ;
And still, when storms eclipse,
The electric ray turn night to day
Around the tossing ships ;
While a joyful cry as thy beams they spy
Goes up from mariners' lips.

Nor earthquake's shock that rends the rock
Thy courses rive asunder ;
Nor tempests' ire, nor raging fire ;
But long o'er ocean's thunder,
To distant date, untouched by fate,
Be thou the world's proud wonder !



THE EDDYSTONE

May son's son's son, time unbegun,
To son's son tell thy story ;
And children learn from these in turn
The tale, by time grown hoary ;
And bards rehearse in loftier verse
The DOUGLASS' lasting glory !

Oh, many a bark, o'er waters dark,
By thee shall find her haven,
And fearless brave the whitening wave
That breaks on capes of Devon.
So mercy's ray light us the way
That leads at last to heaven !

TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY.

ONCE more, fair sister, with fond words of sweet
Congratulatory joy, I haste to greet
Th' auspicious morn, fair April's first and thine ;
And to my aid invoke the sacred Nine
To teach me some fit phrase, wherein to say
How many a bright renewal of this day
My love would wish thee, adding, still, this prayer :
' Heaven, send with each a lessening load of care,
And joys more sure ; till, whatsoe'er this earth
Gave to thy soul of sorrow at its birth,
And of its own dull taint of earthliness,
Dissolving may grow daily less and less ;
But all of heaven thou hast, though hid before,
Shine through thy chastened spirit more and more.
No wish of ours may every ill dispel ;
So willeth Heaven, who alway willeth well :
Not all our prayers from sin can wholly save ;
The life unstained lives but beyond the grave.
Be this the wiser wish : ' Ne'er from thee may

TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY

One warm tear fall, but serves to wash away
Some touch of earthly stain ; ne'er burst a sigh,
But borne upon its wings some ill may fly.'
So oft wild winds of March from verdant meads
Disperse the unwholesome mists December breeds ;
So fields refreshed by showery April oft
Shine fairer from its pure ablutions soft ;
Then field and fallow lose their latest stains,
And richer verdure clothes the moistened plains ;
On springing lawns peeps forth the firstling flower,
And the wet woods drink fast the falling shower ;
While distant hills, that overtop the scene,
Lift through the fading mists their lovely green.
Now oft the blade emerging from the ground
Soiled with its native earth is haply found,
Weighed down, perchance, or crooked turned aside
By some incumbent clod that long defied
December's snows and January's frost,
By April's genial showers subdued at last !
Then through the clod the tender leaf-stalks burst,
By April showers and April sunshine nurst,
Alternate ; till, by steady, slow degrees,
Its verdant vesture from the soil it frees :
Then grows apace ; till, in the swelling ear,
The ripening seeds a golden store appear,

TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY

Waving 'twixt earth and heaven ; till by the blade
Of the tanned reaper's sickle prostrate laid
On the prone field ; then comes the ponderous wain,
And bears the fallen phalanx from the plain.
About the fields, with bending steps and slow,
Like mourners mute the careful gleaners go ;
While from the distant farm glad echoes come
Of happy swains that sing their ' Harvest Home.'
Oh, such mayst thou be, sweet—a golden ear
When angel-reapers in thy fields appear.
So round thy hearse a silent crowd attend,
Who envy while they mourn thy glorious end ;
So, safe in God's own golden garner stored,
Thee with glad hymns His harvest-angels hoard !
Now lies in April's arms the infant Spring,
As thou, erewhile a fragile April thing,
In thy fond mother's lap, all smiles and tears,
That prove the forecasts of thy future years.
Now the lark trembles o'er the dewy meads,
Nor the sharp shower his upward flight impedes,
Nor stays his song that with the rain descends,
And with its pattering music sweetly blends.
Now blows the primrose ; and dark violets peep
From underneath the gorse that gilds the steep.
The cuckoo shouts his greetings to the vales,



TO MY SISTER ON HER BIRTHDAY

Responsive echoed from a hundred dales ;
Oh, dear to thee the cuckoo's note, I know,
And deem for his wild lay thou wouldest forego
The dulcet strains of all the feathered choir
That strike the tamer chords of Nature's lyre.
And dear to thee the brooklet gurgling by,
Leaf-music and the wind's soft melody.
And dear to thee thine April's every charm,
The dripping floweret and the sunlit storm ;
Type of thy spirit's ever-varying guise,
Thyself the mirror of these changeful skies ;
Nor ought less sure to end in sunny smile
Thy brief, bright tears, if laughing not the while,
Flashing at once, perchance, from grave to gay,
Than April is to end in sunniest May.
Oh, long the rolling years thy springs renew,
Thy smiling Mays, and even thine Aprils, too ;
And if needs must they bring the frequent showers,
Bring also in their train the wonted flowers
To deck thy path. I wot not dearer boon
Thou'dst deem it were thy life one cloudless June,
Contented rather to endure the showers
Than tread life's dusty road, and miss the flowers.
Have, then, thy wish, thine April's every grace ;
Heaven add the smiles that wreath the May's lovely face !

JOY AND SORROW.

THERE's not a friend our hearts hold dear,
There is no happiness so near,
But in his looks deceit may lurk,
Or woe beneath it secret work.

There's not a flower on earth so fair,
There is no wreath that poets wear,
But sudden blight may seize the bloom,
Or envious Time proclaim its doom.

There is no lay so softly sung,
There is no lyre so sweetly strung,
But discords may the music mar,
Or one false note the sweetness jar.

There is no dream that haunts our sleep,
With bliss for waking hours too deep,
But all too soon the lids forsake
Of eyes that oft to weeping wake.



JOY AND SORROW

There is no truth to earth so clear,
To wistful faith or fancy dear,
But mists of error may obscure,
Or sophist's art make seem less sure.

Yet sigh not at my harp's sad sound,
For firmer shall this truth be found,—
There is no pang that rends the heart,
But hath some medicine in its smart !

Fair flowers oft lurk in plainest seeds,
And angels walk in beggars' weeds ;
And the stern pang our soul hath riven
Oft proves the messenger of Heaven.

On darkest night still dawn doth rise,
And after storms come cloudless skies ;
So hearts but now o'erbrimmed with woe
With sweetness next may overflow.

There is no human lot so drear
But pitying angels, hovering near,
Bend from their heavens of bliss to shed
Their sweetest balms on sorrow's head.

Though pleasure oft bear bitter fruit,
In grief joy still finds firmest root ;
Let fainting souls this truth seize fast,
God keeps His fairest gifts till last.

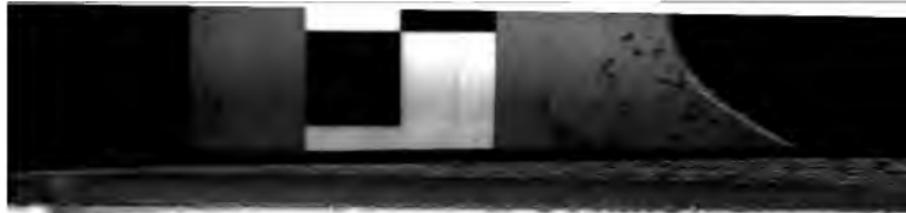
SONG.

I.

SW EET, sweet, round the rosy feet
Of dawn, the blithe winds sing ;
Sweet, sweet, in the noontide heat,
Is the hum of insect wing.
But sweeter, ah ! sweeter,
For music meeter
In mortals' ears to ring,
Fair maiden's sigh,
Fond swain's reply,
'Neath the green leaves whispering.

II.

Sweet, sweet, where the young leaves meet,
The laughter of spring is heard ;
Sweet, sweet, sounds the whispering wheat
When the golden stalks are stirred.
But sweeter, O sweeter,
For music meeter
Than song of breeze or bird,
Fair maiden's sigh,
Fond swain's reply,
Low laugh or whispered word.



TO DEVON

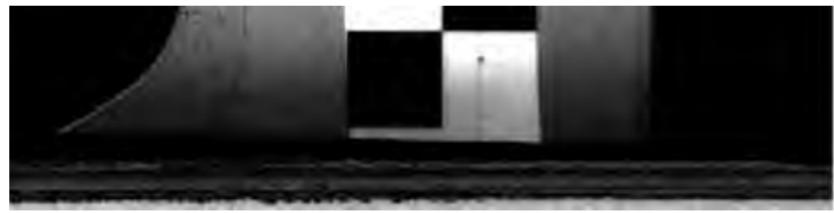
TO DEVON.

HAIL ! hail to thee, adopted shire,
Thou fairer far than seven
Of all that Englishmen admire,
O pleasant land of Devon !

From sea to sea thy confines stretch,
From Tamar's wave to Severn ;
Yet none thou hast, or poor or rich,
But boasts his native Devon.

Though oft thy shore resound the roar
Of waves by tempests driven,
While summer woods by raging floods
And ruthless winds be riven,

Yet, spite of storms, my bosom warms,
To know that under heaven,
Or far or wide, no land beside
Can charm like thee, O Devon !

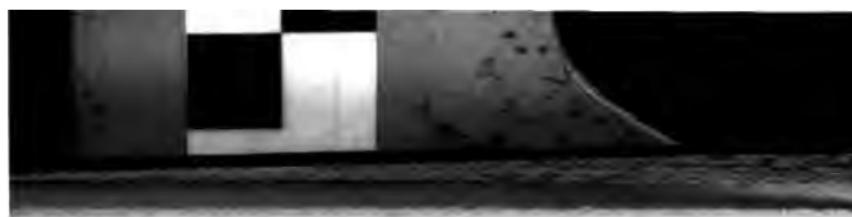


TO DEVON

Oh, fair to me thy moorland's face,
Though rugged and uneven ;
And fairer yet the winding ways
And leafy lanes of Devon !

And dear to me thy daughters fair.
With eyes like summer even ;
And dear as only brothers are
To me the men of Devon.

Bewail who lists thy frequent mists,
And skies to weeping given ;
To me still dear beyond a peer
Be thou, O matchless Devon !



MY LOVE IS FAIR.

My love is fair, is fair ;
A radiant glory is her hair ;
Starry heavens are her eyes,
Orbs most innocently wise.

My love is dear, is dear ;
None came ever half so near
To my spirit's inmost shrine
As this peerless love of mine.

My love is coy, is coy ;
All the arts doth she employ
That do wait on woman's wiles—
Tears and frowns, and pouts and smiles.

My love is kind, is kind ;
Gentle as a summer wind ;
Tender as the turtle's mate ;
Angel lent on man to wait.

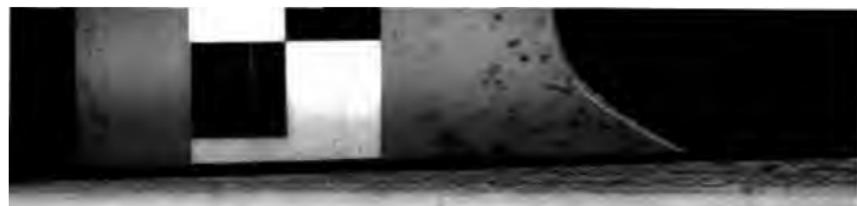
My love is mine, is mine,
By a secret bond divine :
Mine till Death—that knows not Love—
Waft us up to worlds above.

THE LOVER'S DEFENCE.

THOUGH one to my love's praise demurs
That she's not fair as Fanny is,
Yet hark, ye swains, now tell me this :
Were it not heaven but once to kiss
Those lips of hers—sweet lips of hers ?

And one, of her bright locks avers
They are not dark as Delia's are.
I answer make : 'Outshine not far
The crystal beams of eve's lone star,
Sweet eyes of hers—sweet eyes of hers ?'

And one with scorn this boast prefers :
' Her mouth is not so mignon-sweet,
Nor fall so soft her dainty feet,
As Flo's.' But I : ' Can these compete
With hand of hers—white hand of hers ?'



THE LOVER'S DEFENCE

He still, as one who wanton errs :
' Her brow is not so marble clear,
Nor wrought so fine her ivory ear.'
I answer still : ' To me more dear,
Sweet voice of hers—sweet voice of hers !'

Another still, whom envy stirs,
Talks proudly of her sire's broad lands,
Pointing with richly-jewelled hands.
I think how far all these transcends
One smile of hers—one smile of hers.

Peace, peace, ye puny cavillers,
Who worship only outward worth,
And know no good but rank or birth ;
One gift o'erleaps all rank on earth,
That tender, tried, true *heart* of hers.

THOU WERT NOT MADE TO MOURN.

THOU wert not made to mourn. Oh, deem it **false**,

Howe'er so sweetly sung,

That e'er in vain to Heaven ascend the calls

From hearts by anguish wrung.

Thou wert not made to mourn. Oh, count it **shame**

Of all that live, alone

Blind, impious man his Maker dares to blame,

And makes his ceaseless moan.

Peace, fretful heart, forget awhile thy fears,

Thy ceaseless sighs forego ;

Nor in the sad distillery of tears

Weep out a life of woe.

Though fickle Fortune turn her face away,

Nor wealth nor power is thine,

For thee each morning dawns the golden day,

And heavens with bliss do shine.

For thee the clouds their purple curtains **weave**,

Thy wearied limbs to shade ;

For thee soft gales that fan thy brow at eve,

Their Maker cooling made.



THOU WERT NOT MADE TO MOURN

If thou hast eyes, then mayst thou daily see
New flowers each morning born ;

If thou hast ears, the rivulets in their glee
Should make thee less forlorn.

Full many a flower that paints the verdant vales
Mayst thou call all thine own ;
And thine the splendour of the hills and dales,
As though thou wert alone.

The waving trees that throng the woodland glade
With leafy loveliness,
And warbling choirs that love their whispering shade,
Thy daily walks may bless.

The lark, that from the very verge of heaven,
His heavenly rapture gains,
And nightingale, that sings at hush of even,
May thrill thee with their strains.

Thine is the splendour of the midnight moon,
Each lucent star's pure beams ;
For thee the angel Sleep, in slumber's boon,
Descends with golden dreams.

For thee at last, thy short-lived ills to end,
Waits Sleep's twin angel, Death,
And all the joys that for the just shall mend
The pains of parting breath.

THE RIVER'S ANSWER.

PART I.

O RUSHING River, rolling down
Through ever-verdant valleys,
When each kingcup's golden crown
Gleams like a fairy chalice,
Tell me what sweet sights you see,
Winding o'er the pleasant lea
Or through greenwood alleys.

' I see full many a stately tree
In spring-time greener growing ;
I see its boughs bend over me,
Their cool dark shadows throwing ;
I see through the dew-bespangled grass
With their scythes the bending mowers pass,
In the meadows at morning mowing.



THE RIVER'S ANSWER

' I see the cattle that come to cool
Their limbs in my rippling shallows ;
I see the kingfisher play o'er the pool
Where his finny prey lurk in my hollows ;
I see, far up in the sunny sky,
Like white foam, the clouds that sleeping lie,
I see the swifts and the swallows.

' I see the light of the young May morn
Steal forth, like Hope from her heaven ;
I see the banners of sunset burn
Through the quiet woods at even ;
I see the pale moon from her cloud come forth,
And the stars, like kind eyes that o'erwatch the earth,
Orion and the sisters seven.

' I see the leaves that the green trees spread
Like fans o'er my wavy waters ;
And anon I see them drop blood-red,
When their host the frost-king slaughters ;
I see the wild bee yield her breath,
And the silver lily sick unto death ;
I see the woodsman's tall daughters.

THE RIVER'S ANSWER

'I saw them first twin babes at the breast
Of their panting, toiling mother ;
As she paused at noon, on my brink to rest,
Each seemed more fair than the other ;
I saw them grow on through many a summer,
Till at length at her side each brought a new-comer,
Tall and strong, like a brother.'

'I saw their meetings, fond and kind,
And their partings : each seemed fonder ;
I saw sweet lips in rapture joined,
While my waves ran on in wonder ;
But the pale moon smiled mid her cloudless skies,
And the stars, like a mother's tender eyes,
Looked down from their thrones up yonder.'

PART II.

O rolling River, singing clear,
Music wed with motion,
Tell me what sweet sounds you hear
Ere you reach the ocean ;
Whither so swift your waters glide,
Waxing ever more deep and wide.
Like true love's devotion.



THE RIVER'S ANSWER

‘I hear sweet whispers in meadow and brake
Like tones of a leafy lyre ;
I hear the murmur the small gnats make,
Like the twang of a golden wire ;
I hear at morn the lark’s loud trill,
Like a happy spirit, above the hill,
Mounting and mounting higher.

‘I hear the hunter’s echoing horn,
And the woodman’s sturdy stroke ;
I hear the reapers amid the corn,
And voices of village folk ;
I hear the loud, live thunder rattle
Aloft, like big drums beat to battle,
And the crash of the rending oak.

‘I hear across the moorland’s rim
The call of the plaintive plover ;
I hear the small birds’ evening hymn,
And the crake’s harsh cry from the clover.
And I weave them all in my song again,
With whisper of wind and ripple of rain,
When the hurtling storm is over.’

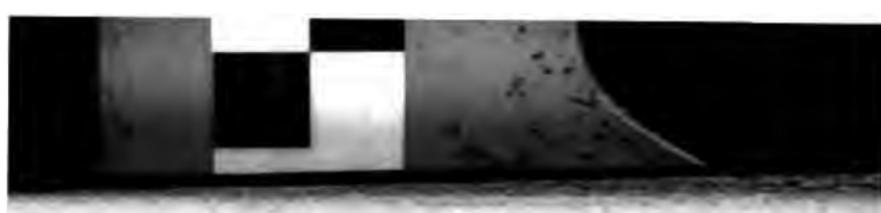
THE RIVER'S ANSWER

PART III.

O sparkling River, glancing bright
By mountain or by meadow,
Dimpling, dancing with delight
O'er thy pebbly bed, oh,
Still, like poet, grave or gay,
Bask in sunshine all the day,
And at night in shadow.

No hideous dyes thy waves pollute,
That oft with streams commingle ;
Nor choking clay to mud transmute,
But clear through dell and dingle
Thy waters glide, till, pure as erst
From native hills they bubbling burst,
They reach the salt sea shingle.

Spring freshets feed thy amber floods,
Yet ne'er to anger move thee,
When April decks with silky buds
The willow wands above thee ;
While like thy current, clear and deep,
Through flowery courses onward creep
The lives of all that love thee.



ON A MOUSE-TRAP.

My curse on thee, that caught, but could not kill,
The luckless mouse ; that sought in vain to fill
His empty maw with thy deceitful bait
That lured him on to his untimely fate.

Accursed task that did on me devolve,
The wretched victim's life-breath to dissolve
In watery pail ; to watch his struggles vain,
And know myself the author of his pain.

No craven cry escaped his bubbling breath,
No piteous moans met the dull ears of Death ;
Yet long he struggled mid the whelming flood
That sent its icy chill through his warm blood.

Yet not in vain : with half-averted eye,
O mouse, thy fellow-mortal saw thee die ;
Resolved henceforth, if mice must still be slain,
No more to put the puny race in pain.

ON A MOUSE-TRAP

No cruel cat shall rend them with her claw,
Nor poisoned viands vex their empty maw ;
But the stout gin, with fangs of forceful steel,
Bring the quick death there is no time to feel.

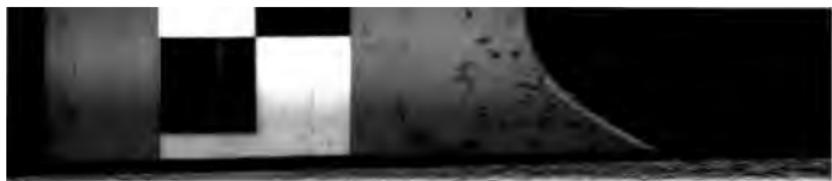
But thee, meek mouse, nor these nor those await
To seal thy short-lived span's uncertain date.
Death's portals dread by thee are past, and known
The worst, while I, who slew thee, of my own

Dark hour reck not the how, nor where, nor when ;
But humbly trust thee to His mercy's ken
Who cares for all. Oh, may His mercy send,
In that dark hour of doom one faithful friend

To stand beside my couch, or o'er my bier
Let fall, as I for thee, the pitying tear ;
For though men deem thee into darkness tossed,
In Him, whence all life lives, no life is lost,

Nor aught dies unregarded, from the least
His hand has fashioned, to the unconscious beast
Thy mandate dooms to die. Then, grateful man,
If life be ta'en, all that thy science can

Of suffering save let utmost care prevent ;
Nor more than must to meet man's needs be spent
Of life's rich stream. So may the Heavenly Power
Befriend in turn Humanity's last hour.



THE FORSAKEN HOME.

I.

BESIDE the pleasant orchard plot
Yon silent house forsaken stands,
Like one long lost in lonely lands,
Who lives by all he loved forgot.

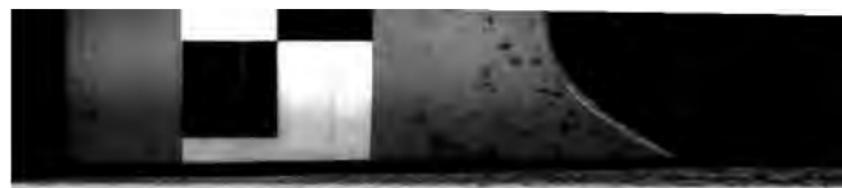
Through closèd casements all is dark
Within the long-deserted walls,
Save where through some long fissure falls
A beam in chambers cold and stark

And still ; for all the wonted stir
Wherewith it once did seem alive
Is hushed as some forsaken hive,
And silent as a sepulchre,

Save for one swallow, twittering low,
That clings beneath the mouldering eaves ;
Or when from out yon chestnut leaves
Some widowed linnet tells her woe ;

THE FORSAKEN HOME

Or smothered voice of one small rill
Babbling about her wave-worn stones ;
Or hoarse night breezes making moans ;
Or foxes crying from the hill ;
Or when beside the bolted door
Sweet Robin at the window sings,
While little troops of wild-eyed things
Gambol across the nursery floor.
With many a sweet familiar bloom
Still garden-beds are sadly gay,
Where works the mole his viewless way
Winding, like mortals' paths, in gloom.
Across the shady orchard's space
Long straggling boughs the fruit-trees bend,
Groping, as if they sought some friend
To prune them once more into grace.
O melancholy, mouldering cot,
How sad to me your silent fate !
For feet that lingered here but late
Have hallowed every well-known spot.
For I can never careless scan,
Or undisturbed behold the place
That once held kindred of my race,
Or lent its shelter unto man ;



THE FORSAKEN HOME

That once to fellow-mortal wore
The sanctity and name of Home ;
That, wheresoe'er his steps might roam,
Still drew him homeward more and more ;

Where children once safe shelter found,
Or bowed the head in holy sleep :
Although it crumble heap on heap,
'Twill crumble into sacred ground.

About it softer winds shall wake,
Above, the moon look milder down,
The shadows wear a fairer frown,
And storms beat lighter for its sake.

For still for man's untimely fate
Methinks mute Nature ceaseless grieves,
And nightly from her million leaves
Weeps for the hearths left desolate.

II.

Forlorn as some sad poet soul,
Who wanders round the world apart,
Or lover struck by Cupid's dart,
Whose wound shall never more grow whole,

THE FORSAKEN HOME

So sad to me yon dwelling seems—
Gray monument of vanished years—
A fount of never-failing tears,
A hapless ghost that haunts my dreams :
A body without soul or sense,
A harp whose music all is mute,
An oak slow rotting at the root,
A grave of loves long perished hence.
Yet round it, lovely as of old,
Calm Nature keeps her wonted face,
Nor doffs for grief a single grace,
Nor stays her music manifold.
And I, who loved but late to deem
Her moved by mortal woe or weal,
Seem now, 'neath these fair skies, to feel
My fancy but a poet's dream.
For still the seasons wax and wane,
And still their beauty comes and goes,
Unmarred by any mortal woes,
Nor heeding any human pain.
Still breathe their perfume as of yore
The primrose and the violet's flower ;
And still the daisy decks the bower
Of one who counts their stars no more.



THE FORSAKEN HOME

Still year by year the blossom breaks
And blushes on the whitened walls,
Or fruit grows ruddy-ripe and falls,
When autumn's wind the woodland shakes.

Beneath the summer's dazzling noon
The golden bees with happy sound
Are heard ; and in the lake's clear round
Is mirrored still night's trembling moon.

Still oft on balmy autumn eves,
In liquid notes along the vale,
Sad Philomel still tells her tale
To lovers listening 'mong the leaves.

For thee alone, dark house of doom,
No spring thy wonted flowers restores ;
They wither upon foreign shores,
Or fill perchance a foreign tomb.

I weep that never more again
Familiar forms shall fill the place,
Nor evermore sweet childhood's face
Shall watch me from the window-pane.

One morn I found a tiny shoe
The little foot had lately left,
And, like a man of hope bereft,
I wept as new-made widowers do.

THE FORSAKEN HOME

Thus more and more, O silent cot,
Your image grows into my heart,
Who of my own life lend you part,
Companion of your lonely lot.

And mingle with yon murmuring rill,
That winds about the wave-worn stones,
Or hoarse night breezes making moans,
A sweeter, sadder music still :

The music of my heart's dull moan,
That weeps for friendship's sad decay,
And sweet friends wandered far away,
And joys for ever winged and flown.

III.

I dreamed once more from foreign shores
The friends of happier years returned ;
Once more each hearth, rekindled, burned,
And wide with welcome stood the doors.

Where shadows wont but late to lurk
The taper shed its gleam around,
And once again was heard the sound
Of woman singing at her work.



THE FORSAKEN HOME

The house-dog grumbled o'er his bones ;
The gates swung creaking to and fro ;
And distant came the rumbling slow
Of waggon-wheels across the stones.

Blithe voices from the orchard rang ;
Brisk feet went pattering here and there ;
And frequent on the noontide air
Broke from the barn the flail's loud clang.

So sweet the dream, I rose at day,
Trembling with unfamiliar joy—
Like child from dreams of some new toy
The unwelcome morn will take away.

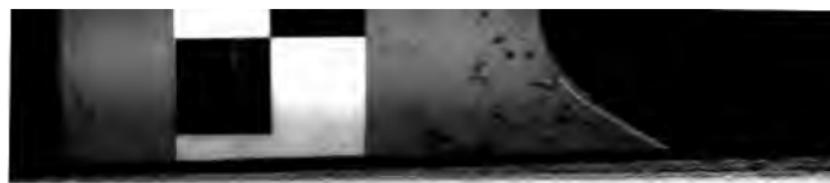
I wandered through the well-known ways,
Of old in friendship's ardour trod ;
The very flowers did seem to nod
Acquaintance as in happier days.

I reached the place, and, lo ! my dream
Seemed real : from the chimneys broke
In pale blue wreaths the curling smoke,
Smote by the bright sun's morning beam.

Before me on the greensward sung
A little child with flaxen curls ;
While on her lap, in lieu of pearls,
Her pink-tipped daisy-chain she strung.

THE FORSAKEN HOME

I, smiling, praised the starry flowers
She held betwixt her finger tips,
And longed to stoop and touch the lips
That bore me back to happier hours ;
While from the threshold quickly rose
Her dumb four-footed guardian friend,
And towards us hastily did wend
With keen inquisitorial nose ;
And at the door appeared a face,
And comely form of matron mould,
Who, ere her lips the fact had told,
I guessed new mistress of the place.
Advancing then, I told my name,
And how to me the place had been,
Long since, the fondly-cherished scene
Of friendship's joys ; whereat the dame
With more than kindly interest glowed,
And bade me still regard her door
Open, ev'n as in days of yore,
And all her lord's improvements showed.
But I, as on some friend's loved face,
Of old in humbler fortunes known,
By wealth or fame to greatness grown,
Looked sadly at the altered place ;



THE FORSAKEN HOME

Till toward the garden ground we drew,
All trimly fresh in bed and bower :
I smiled, for here still many a flower
In its old haunts familiar grew.

The lilac on the laden air
From the high hedge its scent diffused ;
And by the garden-seat, unused
So long, drooped lilies dazzling fair ;
And here beside the humming hives,
'Mid borders oversnowed with lime,
Were purple lavender and thyme,
And summer savory and chives.

Now, oft beneath the woodbine's shade,
Holding a little hand in mine,
I watch the twinkling dewdrops shine,
Or mark the fires of sunset fade ;
While, o'er my memory gathering fast,
Sweet recollections round me play,
That robe the bareness of to-day
In raiment of the happy past—
As some fond mother, 'mid her tears,
In garments of some long-lost child
A later decks, but half beguiled
Even yet of the dark grief of years.

LADY MARY.

I.

LADY MARY, beauty's mirror,
Praise of poet scorning,
Thy sweet mien and maiden presence
Mock my art's adorning.

Fairer than the budding lily ;
Lovelier than the opening rose ;
Airs of heaven wait upon her ;
Evermore, her maid of honour,
Love before her goes.

With a queenly step and stately
Through the garden walks she glides,
Where the calm lake's level mirror
Clasps her in its tremulous tides.



LADY MARY

With the music of her motion,
Little trills of laughter stir
The long walks of whispering aspen ;
And the winds sigh after her,

Like low murmurs on the margin
Of a zephyr-haunted pool,
Where the wooing winds do wanton
With the waters clear and cool.

Such the rustle of her raiment,
As she sweeps along the walks ;
And the flowers of that sweet music
Dream all night upon their stalks.

II.

Form of faultless fashioning,
Never mortal moulder's hand,
From divine dreams rapt upstarting,
Such a gracious being planned.

Such unnumbered arts of gesture
Through her lightest action shine,
That the rapt beholder, gazing,
Deems her oft a thing divine.

LADY MARY

Foot of fawn, that hears the hunter,
Darting through some flowery dell,
Ne'er more lightsome o'er the lilies
Than her airy footsteps fell !

Hands whose clasp, my own enclosing,
Heart and palm do both embrace ;
Lips that Love's sweet music breathing
Mould a mouth of matchless grace.

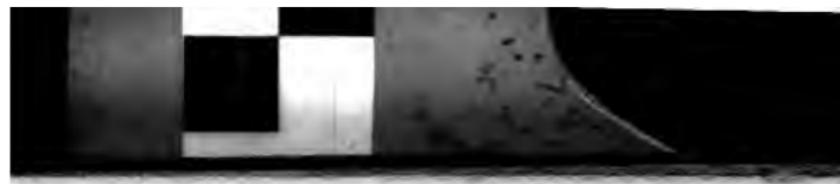
Tones more exquisitely tender
(Like soft lute's by lover played),
Than through her fair throat come throbbing
Never yet sweet music made.

Eyes athwart whose cloudless azure.
Like fair forms of angels fleet
Evermore on noiseless pinions
Fancies numberless and sweet.

With divine dream-languors drooping,
Lids that silken lashes lace
With their fringed shadows curtain
The twin lode-stars of her face.

Like some peerless perfect flower
Divinely drooping on its stem,
With her tresses' golden dower
Crowned like regal diadem—





LADY MARY

Such her lovely face meseemeth ;
So her dear head droopeth coy ;
Lady Mary, maiden's mirror,
Whom no selfish griefs annoy.

III.

When through purple lids of morning
Gleams, half veiled, heaven's virgin hue,
And the hare her feet hath dabbled
In the daisies wet with dew,

In her bower the Lady Mary
Makes another new sunrise ;
Through her fringed lids unfolding
Daylight of her dewy eyes.

Through the woods her way she wendeth,
Where the fairest lilies be—
Lilies yet to her must render
Palm for spotless purity.

Where broad beeches burgeon o'er her,
Hark ! I hear her singing blithe,
While from misty meadows ringeth
Music of the mower's scythe.

LADY MARY

Little finches round her flutter ;
Scarce the leveret quits her path ;
Timid hind her steps pursueth,
Such a winning grace she hath.

Oft in winter's churlish season
She hath ministered to their need,
From her bounteous hand bestowing
Fragrant stalk or golden seed.

Where, like Ruth, beside the reapers
Stands she 'mid the barley-mows,
Not a man but inly blesses
The rare beauty of her brows ;

Where the lowly sons of labour
Of their toilsome lot complain,
From her lips such greeting floweth,
Turns to pleasure all their pain.

IV.

Lady Mary ! muse's garland
Fairer names did ne'er entwine ;
He alone their grace can measure
Who hath leave to call her 'mine.'



LADY MARY

All my fingers fall a-tremble,
Pulses faint and flutter,
When in soft dissyllables
Her sweet name I utter.

Tongue will stammer, lips will quiver,
Vowels melt and mingle ;
And her tender palm but touching
Sets my veins a-tingle.

Lovest thou, sweet Lady Mary ?
Love hath sought thee, surely ;
Oh, if one should love thee, lady,
Perfectly and purely,

Wouldst thou grant him gracious hearing ?
Wouldst thou answer truly ?
And if love true love should mirror,
Wouldst thou wed him duly ?

True of heart, methinks, O maiden,
Noblest of the noble he,
Prince or paladin of olden,
Who would wed with thee.

Say'st thou ' Nay,' sweet Lady Mary,
' Lowlier love might win thee ?'
Deem'st thou of the wingèd hopes
Thou hast woke within me ?

LADY MARY

By those downcast cheeks' soft crimson,
By the secret sign
Of those lips' unspoken language,
Maiden, thou art mine—

Mine, yet never more mine only ;
For, by magic of my art,
Who henceforth these rhymes rehearseth
Shall enshrine thee in his heart,

His own fair one here beholding,
Dear by whatsoever name ;
All her grace and maiden beauty
Fitting to my fancy's frame.

v.

Break, O morn, in golden splendours,
Rising from yon orient sea ;
Happy light, through her low lattice,
Wake her with sweet thoughts of me !

Clash, sweet bells, your golden clangour
From yon minster steeple-topped ;
Breathe, O marriage music, round her
From loud organs golden-stopped !



LADY MARY

Chime, O seas, moon-charmèd meeting ;
Whisper, waves, on yon white shore ;
Birds, 'mid your new Edens warble ;
Gurgle, brooklets, evermore !

Odours from far isles elysian,
Blowing over balmy sees,
Waft her fragrance where she listens
Love's immortal melodies !

Summer night, fair flowers bedewing,
Light me to my lady's bower !
Happy night that ends my wooing !—
Love hath reached the perfect flower.

IN AN OLD GARDEN.

I SAW but late the fairest sight
Methinks was seen since ancient days,
When oft at eve belated wight
Saw fairies in the woodland ways.

Within a garden where were seen
Unnumbered vegetable shapes ;
Where, tall cypress-trees between,
Red currants sunned their mimic grapes ;

Where pansy bloomed beside the pea,
And pot-herbs mixed with mignonette
And musk—a fragrant family,
All round in sweet disorder met ;

Where rhubarb reddened like the rose,
And scarlet-runners reared their screen ;
While many a plant best named in prose
Filled out the various shades of green—



IN AN OLD GARDEN

There this fair sight did I behold :
 Tall lilies wearing crowns of light ;
Like silver bells, with tongues of gold,
 They swung their cups of dazzling white.
Pond-lily yet, by lake or stream,
 Than these shone ne'er more purely pale ;
Nor ever yet more lustrous gleam
 The spotless virgins of the vale.
Each summer breeze they lightly braved,
 And stood full stately on their stalks ;
And ever as to the wind they waved,
 Their fragrance filled the garden walks.
And eyes of keener vision far
 Than mine had marked their dazzling sheen ;
For, lo ! within each lucent star
 A wondrous vision there was seen—
A giddy host with gauzy wings,
 And bodies black as burnished jet,
A countless throng of happy things
 That haunts my memory even yet.
Seemed not alone for nectared sweet
 They sought each flowery chalice fair,
But fain to ply their nimble feet
 Awhile in happy pastime there.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

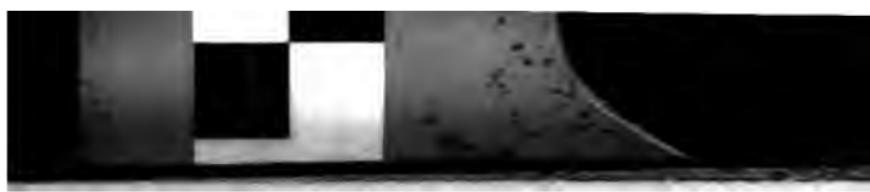
As at some jocund festival,
Methought, to some rare harmony,
Unheard by me, they danced, and all
To music moved their antennæ.

Then like the instantaneous burst
Of some bright bubble on a stream,
Or as by morning light dispersed
The fairy fabric of a dream,
So vanished from my wondering view
The giddy throng as, by the wand
Of arch-enchanter touched, a crew
Of knights and dames in fairyland.

For, lo ! athwart the pageant moved
A shadow, cause of sudden fear,
That to my search the presence proved
Of hungry sparrow hovering near.

Then saw I where, stretched all around,
Some lay unmoved in death fast froze,
Like travellers by their comrades found
Death-smitten mid deep Alpine snows.

Whether of surfeit sweet they died,
Or that their life's brief span was o'er,
I know not ; but I inly sighed
Their mates should know them now no more.



IN AN OLD GARDEN

‘Alas !’ I cried, ‘for these like those
That boast, vain men ! a nobler birth ;
Their little lives are vexed with foes
That watch them even ’mid their mirth.
‘For them, as at some Memphian feast,
Death crowns their very banquet-board ;
And o’er them all from first to least
Fate holds his Damoclean sword.’
* * * * *
The shadow passed, the sparrow flew
To find a dinner somewhere else,
When instant, lo ! the giddy crew
Repeople all the shining cells,
Careless of their dead comrades cold
And Death’s dread shadow ever near,
Like men with hardihood grown bold,
They frolicked on without a fear.
Then praised I mercy’s gracious plan
That hides from all their day of doom,
That known had oft made life’s brief span
A dolorous journey to the tomb.
But now, unmoved by craven fears,
We end each day’s appointed task ;
Or, in brief interludes from cares,
In life’s permitted pleasures bask.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

For He who made all creatures knew
Unmeet for all sole work or play ;
And while He sets their tasks, sets, too,
To each his several holiday ;

Lest, too long bent, the bow at length
Should break, or part the o'er-taut string ;
So minds o'er-strung forego their strength,
And lose their life's elastic spring.

This moral through all Nature lives,
' Nor toil nor timely rest refuse ;
Enjoy the good thy Maker gives ;
They wrong Him only who misuse.'

Even thus the lilies of the field
With purer honey oft repay
My muse's quest, than erst did yield
The fabled flowers of classic lay

That wooed on Hybla's honeyed steep,
Or by Hymettus' murmuring rill,
To golden bells and blossoms deep
Bees humming round the elysian hill.

DEDICATORY SONNET TO THE FOREGOING
VERSES.

LADY, since first within your garden fair
For you long since these silver lilies grew,
Methinks by right should still belong to you
Whate'er of lesson meet to lighten care
My muse, by happy chance directed there,
From out their chaliced chambers erstwhile drew,
Who but as little bees are wont to do,
Seeks still from every flower some nectar rare ;
That so with honeyed memories' golden store
My flowerless age betimes being furnishèd,
May from the bounteous past be hourly fed
As with celestial manna more and more ;
Such memories, Lady, in your heart's rich hive
Keep long with their sweet food sweet thoughts alive.

WELCOME TO MARCH.

COME March, wild month, and o'er the meads.
Breathe the new life all nature needs ;
Unbind the rill and bend the reeds,
And wake the souls in sleeping seeds.

Disperse yon clouds that blot from view
The heavenly arch of azure hue,
Till once again in garments new
Bends over all the blissful blue.

While, seen from yonder southern porch,
Along an ever-lengthening arch
The mounting sun pursues his march,
That scarce but late o'erlooked yon larch.

Though not for thee the woodlands wear
Their summer robes, unclothed and bare,
What witchery of *forms* is there !
Seemed never foliage half so fair,



WELCOME TO MARCH

As yonder boughs of ashen gray,
That in the wild March breezes sway ;
Or where with golden mosses gay
Broad oaks their bronzed arms display.

No naiad yet, devoid of dress,
Nor statued goddess garmentless,
Me more with moving charms impress
Than wintry woods' chaste loveliness.

And though behind some northern wall
Late snows may lurk, a remnant small,
In vernal vales thy clarion call
Wakes up the flowers from winter's thrall.

Thy herald pure, pale snowdrop came,
By fiery crocus put to shame ;
Anon the magic of thy name
Shall dancing daffodils proclaim.

Nor fears pale primrose to put forth
Her petals in thy biting north,
While from her lap the waking earth
Showers buttercups—a golden birth.

Nor lack there sounds, as these the sight
The sister sense to yield delight,
When streamlets hurrying from the height
Their voices in the vale unite.

WELCOME TO MARCH

Or where, close by, a gentler sound
Makes childhood's pulse with rapture bound ;
Where, their warm mothers frisking round,
The firstlings of the flock are found.

Yet though, wild month, we loath should miss
These joys, and even thy wind's keen kiss,
Chifest of all thy charms is this—
Sweet pledge of balmier April's bliss.

And rainbow hopes that round us play,
To woo the young year on its way,
With whisper sweet, 'Be gay, be gay !
There's but a month ere cometh May.'



HAWNS AND DENDLES.

FROM troubles far of fretful trade,
For mortals wearied with the strife
Of the loud city's feverish life,
Green waits a wild glen's gladdening glade.

By lanes with feathery ferns embanked,
With many a winding runs the way
With sweet-breath'd primrose golden-gay,
Or with proud foxgloves richly pranked.

Till sudden, lo ! beneath our feet,
With welcome to its native woods,
The yeasty Yealm her amber floods,
Rolls Blachford-ward with music sweet.

Anon its shining track we trace
Backward to where beneath the shade
Of Yeo's scant grove, in order laid,
The rugged green rude tables grace.

HAWNS AND DENDLES

Then onward still by field and farm,
With sidelong glance at Wisdome Mill
We haste, and eager mount the hill,
Impatient of the expected charm

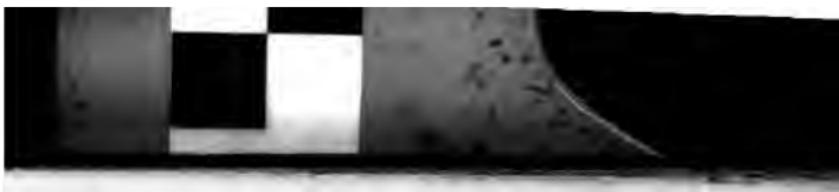
That ever dwells in waving woods,
With music of soft-murmuring leaves,
And all that mortal sense perceives
Of bliss in sylvan solitudes.

There evermore its merry song
O'er countless rocks the river sings
Of all the thousand magic things
That round its mossy margin throng.

There clearer sounds the cuckoo's call,
The throstle whistles through the wood ;
While swells through lark's sweet interlude
Wild music of some waterfall,

Half seen where moving branches meet,
Like lady from her sylvan bower
Stepping to meet her paramour,
Yon river foaming at her feet.

Here oft the raven's sullen croak
Startles the ear with angry cry,
That speaks her brood close-cowering nigh
Tall-nested in some ancient oak.



HAWNS AND DENDLES

And wilder scenes his vision wait
Who scales Yealm Steps' steep stony stair ;
Mounts up, and meets the moorland air,
And feels new life his lungs dilate ;

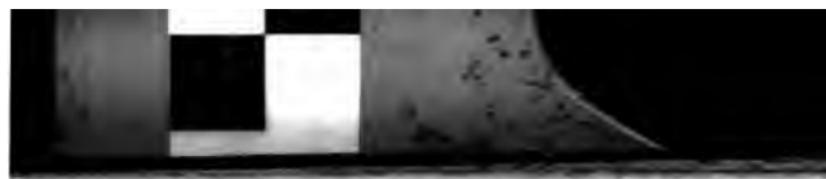
Then homeward, hungry, hies his way,
Yet full at heart, and with him brings
An image fair of outward things
To cheer him through some darksome day ;

Or, haply, some dull task beguile,
Sweet Hawns and Dendles, with the dream
He hears once more thy merry stream,
Or sees Combe Woods around him smile.

THE LOVER'S CANTICLE.

God bless my Love, and God bless me
And my love for my Love, and my Love's love for me.
May we live and love together,
Through fair and foul weather,
Like birds of one feather,
Singing each for other,
God bless my Love, and God bless me
And my love for my Love, and my Love's love for me.

God bless my Love, and God bless me
And my love for my Love, and my Love's love for me.
Then, though misfortune find us,
Or grief sometimes enwind us,
It shall but closer bind us ;
Till, leaving care behind us,
Like birds that wing together
Their way to warmer weather,
We, loosed from earthly tether,
May soar aloft together,
Singing still for other,
God bless my Love, and God bless me
And my love for my Love, and my Love's love for me.



SONG OF THE LYNS.

COME, my Love, low winds are calling
From the vale in voices sweet ;
Where the lone Lyn, falling, falling,
Wanders down by Watersmeet.
Woods are waking, dews down-shaking,
Flowers upspringing myriad-eyed.
Come, these windy heights forsaking,
Wend we where the waters glide,
Veins of liquid amber seeming,
From far moorlands downward drawn,
'Neath their gold and purple gleaming,
Diamonded with dews of dawn.
Come where deep in green dells peeping,
Anemone and primrose sweet,
Dear to childhood, in the wild wood
Like fair youths and maidens meet.
Come, my Love ! like Lyn's loud torrents,
Rolling seawards evermore,
Onward flow our lives' twin currents :
Hark, I hear the echoing shore !
Then come where greening, dark rocks screening,
Oak and ash and elm, erst bare,
Burgeon ever, while the river
Hourly mirrors scenes more fair !

TO ONE DROWNED AT SEA.

THOU liest far ; yet not so far,
But o'er us soon the self-same star
That trembles o'er thy briny bed
Its radiance on our tears shall shed,
Who nightly on our bended knees
Uplift for thee sweet litanies.

Thou liest deep ; but not too deep
For Love, that o'er thy corse will keep
Her vigil oft, when, winged with prayer,
The wistful fancy wafts her there ;
Nor yet too deep for heaven to hold
Secure as sleep in daisied mould.

Thou liest lone ; and yet not lone
They sleep, though sunk in seas unknown,
Who in the great communion
Of saints in heaven and earth are one ;
Though sundered by the unsounded sea,
Death breaks not yet their unity.

TO ONE DROWNED AT SEA

Thou liest calm—oh, blessed calm !
Rude winds, that shake the pillared palm
Enisled in yonder orient sea,
Break not thy deep tranquillity ;
Calm now, whatever storms befall,
Till sounds, calm then, the archangel's call.

FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE.

ONCE more there breathes a world new-born ;
Once more this magic April morn,
With a wonder of gladness, earth wakes from the thrall
Of winter, outworn, at thy jubilant call,

O maiden Spring !

For the windows of heaven are thrown wide to the world,
And the mists from earth's face are upfolded and furled,
And the foam on the billows is curdled and curled,
And the dales and the downs with dew are impearled,

For thy welcoming.

Then wake, my heart ! take up thy part ;

Awake and sing

The praise of ever-beauteous Spring !

Oh, gentle Spring, of thee bereft,
What solace to my soul were left !
No season seemest thou to me,
But some sweet-souled divinity,
Breathing over sea and earth
Music and ethereal mirth :
Whom my eyes cannot behold,
Fashioned in no mortal mould ;



FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE

Yet my heart thy presence feels,
And each sense of thee reveals
Some sweet truth, some charm new-found,
Born of scent, or sight, or sound.
To me, albeit thou dost dwell,
To my eye invisible,
On mountain-peak or quiet dell,
Thou art clothed, by fancy's spell,
In the guise of maiden's form,
Living, breathing, fresh, and warm,
Flitting through green glades and bowers,
Clad in drapery of flowers ;
With a veil of sunshine streaming
Over thy form, with lustre beaming ;
While thine eyes with lucent light
Twinkle like the stars at night.
And sometimes each orb appears
Bathèd in thy true-love tears ;
For love must weep, though weep for nought,
With o'er-flowing gladness fraught.
Therefore, 'neath thy silken lashes,
Tears oft mingle with the flashes,
Tears that show the love unseen
Hidden in thy soul serene,
Such as oft the bride lets fall
When she quits her father's hall.

FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE

Even thus thou art to me,
What some human fair should be,
Filling up the empty void
In my spirit like a bride.

Yes, my bride is the beauteous Spring,
And her matchless dower
Each blossoming flower
That blooms where the wood-birds sing ;
And richer their bloom,
And their sweet perfume,
Than the dower of the bride of a king.

Oh, my love is a virgin fair !
And my true-love's eyes
The deep blue skies,
And the sunbeams her shining hair ;
Oh, no miser guesses
The wealth of those tresses—
Those tresses so golden and rare !
Oftentimes I lie, like a child,
At the feet of my bride,
In the calm eventide ;
And she sings me a song-tune wild,
Till the eyes of their tears,
And the heart of its fears,
And the earth of its gloom, are beguiled.



FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE

Then, hail to thee, blessed and balmy Spring,
With the soul of the New Year 'neath thy wing !
For thy presence earth pants, like an eastern maid
Who waits for her lover in odorous glade.
Thy coming, O Spring, is like wine to the heart ;
Like sap to the leaves when the young buds start ;
Like dew to the flowers ; like stars to the night ;
Like moonlight to lovers ; to captives the light ;
Like gold to the miser ; like health to the ailing ;
Like summer to sailors from sunless seas sailing ;
Like home to the wanderer ; to the wearied one rest ;
To the toil-escaped bird the sight of its nest ;
Like mother to infant ; like babe to its mother ;
To sister's fond heart the embrace of a brother ;
Like husband's return to the new-wedded wife ;
Like his tent to the soldier when closes the strife—
Such joy's in thy advent, beauteous Spring !
So sweet be thy welcome, earth's loveliest thing !
We know when thou comest, for beauty and bloom
Spring up 'neath thy feet like life from the tomb ;
A whisper of hope stirs the soft-sighing trees,
A throb of expectancy wakes in the breeze.
There's a flutter of joy in each wild bird's wings
And a welcome vibrates in each note that she sings,
A trembling delight thrills each green grassy blade ;

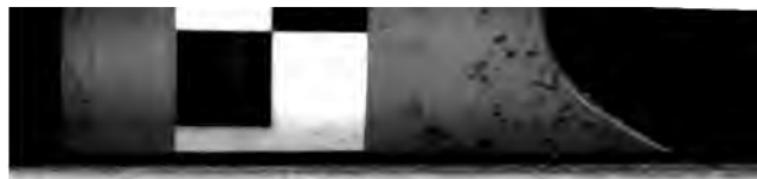
FRAGMENT OF A SPRING ODE

And somehow there's something in every glade,
In the sky's deep blue and the woods' bright green,
Announces thine advent, the woodland's gay queen.
And when thou art here, what a burst of deep pleasure
Fills Nature's wide soul to the height of its measure !
And she donneth her kirtle of loveliest green,
Till the hills and the valleys, and woodlands between,
Laugh out with delight at their own lovely hue,
Which heaven re-echoes her blue breadth through.

Anon thou break'st on the silent wood,
Like love on a giant's solitude,
And the forest wakes from its wintry sleep,
And murmurs and sighs 'mid its shadows deep.

Each tree the mystic call hath heard,
And wakes as at a wizard's word,
And soon in gayest doth appear,
Like lover when his lady's near ;
And mark where yon streamlet glides swiftly along.
Its music grows louder, its current more strong,
And its waters have stolen the tint of the skies,
And rival the hue of the speedwell's eyes.

* * * *



THE POET AND NATURE.

GREEN-WAVING woods ! fain would I lie at last
Somewhere, not out of consecrated earth,
Where o'er me still your various voice should sound
Priest-like, in whispered benedictions sweet ;
Or all night long your leafy palms uplift
Should move in prayer, or drop a dewy tear
On my green couch ; or, 'neath the gilded noon,
Send forth a sound of murmurous wings aloft
Humming their ceaseless requiem o'er my head ;
And there, perchance, in the soft summer gloom
Sweet Philomel should lull the listening woods
With her immortal plaint's sad melody,
Like some sweet seraph that sings in Paradise
To soothe the slumbering saints in glory lapped.

For still, methinks, my mouldering corse should keep
Through some dim spiritual sense, surviving death,
A dream-like consciousness of waking things,
Like men in sleep, and even though dust, should feel,

THE POET AND NATURE

When o'er my head the solemn mourners moved
To the slow knell ; or sound of Sabbath chimes
Summons the waking hamlet to its prayers ;
Or when the merry marriage bells ring round
Their jocund peal ; or sound of holy hymn
Swells sweetly upward from the village choir,
I still should know, and feel, even in my grave,
When Benediction sheds its dew around ;
Or when 'twas day or night, and mortals sleep
The sweet short sleep that rounds our waking life,
While I and my dead co-mates underground,
In never-waking dreams of dateless sleep,
As in a trance should watch the world grow old,
And, after ages lain 'neath churchyard sod,
Should feel a touch, and hear a voice divine,
Rousing the sleeping millions from the dust.
Yet, ere the dawn of that tremendous day,
Full many a foretaste I, methinks, should feel
In the annual resurrection of the world,
When in new springs the mounting sun once more,
As from a hearth rekindled year by year,
Through Nature's frozen veins shoots forth new fire,
Warming the world ; and from the wold the snows
Melt like a ghost that feels returning day ;
Or when loud gales of March their trumpets blow



THE POET AND NATURE

O'er hill and vale, to bid the world awake ;
Or when the bounteous showers bedew the ground
In the sweet April days, and grass is green ;
And all along beneath the churchyard wall
Pale violets their dewy leaves unclose,
Moist with spring's tears, and breathing spiritual breaths
Of fragrance round like memories of the dead ;
And from their haunts wild things come forth and sport
Over my fast-closed eyes ; while in the woods
The birds, new-paired, their wedded wings low wave
Over a hundred nests of happy things ;
And a new earth looks up through myriad eyes
Of flowers to a new heaven, whose glorious orb
In them beholds his sovereign countenance
Innumerable mirrored, his gay progeny.
And I, methinks, should know when spring was gone
From the green woods, and summer crowned the year
With golden prime ; and in the traveller's path
The starry speedwell, with half-human eyes,
Fills with sweet tenderness his heart and wakes
Within him thoughts of home and his sweet babes ;
Or when the fiery summer was burnt out,
And autumn, following, sets the woods afame,
To make a sunset glory for the year,
When corn is housed, and the wet ways grow wild,

THE POET AND NATURE

And all the woods are widowed of their leaves,
And clouds come back around the closing year,
And light grows less, and all things seem to die
Their annual death, still should I feel and hear.
For never Nature, whom from manhood's prime
Even to hoar hairs I worshipped even with tears,
Will let me to the dust of death go down,
And breathe no message more of things I loved,
Who in her spring-time with the joy divine
Of her invisible presence filled my soul,
And ever to my inward eye appeared
Some glorious maiden walking the rapt earth,
With echoing steps whose music nigh had danced
The enchanted land to flowery Eden back.
Her eyes methought the clear unnumbered stars,
That through the veil of night looked smiling forth ;
Her verdant vesture immemorial woods ;
Her voice the murmur of a million founts,
Rolling with gladsome laughter through the land ;
Her odorous breath the incense-laden winds.
Her all things worshipped ; over her blue skies
Enamoured hung ; the love-sick winds at noon
Sighed after her ; and gently-whispering trees
Put forth green arms to touch her as she passed.
Of her, methought, the never-silent choir



THE POET AND NATURE

Of warbling birds chanted amid the groves ;
Even crystal streams, whose veins were founts of ice,
Murmured her name ; and many a love-sick flower
Wasted its soul in odours for her sake.
Her mild-eyed kine amid their fragrant food
Sought, lowing, yet not knowing what they sought ;
While down in leafy dells, hid from all eyes,
The bashful violet drooped, like one who holds
Within his heart a love beyond all words
For some fair queen, the mistress of a court ;
But, being lowly born, ne'er breathes his love,
But seeks a glade apart, and spends in sighs
And hopeless grief a life of woeful days,
Till Nature, ever tender towards all,
Whispers the bees, the couriers of her train,
Or waiting winds, and bids them haste to bear
To every flower her secret message sweet.
All these their queen confessed, but none, methinks,
Like the loud lark, that all day under heaven,
Beyond all rivals blest, poured forth his soul
In such sweet songs as lovers only know ;
While Philomel, in some green copse hard by,
As one unnoticed 'mid the courtier throng,
Pours forth all day her soul's melodious plaint
To the wild woods, and me, her mate in grief,

THE POET AND NATURE

Yearning for but one glimpse of that fair face
And heavenly form, with light celestial crowned,
Still sought, yet never found, though oft pursued
With eager-wingèd feet from glade to glade,
Even to the verge of yonder beckoning hills,
Purple with lights of even, or, half seen,
Glimmering through mists of moonlight pale and pure.
Then, like a first love, faded from my heart
Her magic spell, and melted into dreams ;
And, like a second, Summer came and filled
My bounding pulses with warm tides of bliss,
And to my lips upheld her goblet crowned
With rosy wine from her rich veins transfused ;
Who oft by flowery meads, green-rivaged streams,
Or under the green woof of whispering woods,
Led me entranced in a sweet maze of bliss,
Or won me to herself on dazzling peaks
Of lonely mountain-tops ; or by the swell
Of boundless seas sat by me hour on hour,
Lulling my love-sick soul with her sweet songs
Of life, and death, and love that cannot die :
The life that poets breathe in purer worlds,
The death of all things vile—grief, hate, and pain ;
The love of married hearts, fate crossed on earth ;
Or under the sweet cope of moonlit skies,



THE POET AND NATURE

With lays of faërie, and legends hoar
Of knights and dames, enchanted castles, isles
Elysian, realms where Love is lord of all,
Made all the summer night a fairy tale.
Then in sad Autumn's days she seemed like one
In whom Love sees, through mist of gathering tears,
Youth's tender blossoms fading 'neath the frost
Of early doom ; the eyes grown wildly bright,
Like Autumn's rising stars ; the hectic cheek,
Mocking her hopes with the false hues of health ;
Till one sad morn Love wakes and Youth is not,
But only Death's cold form lies at her feet,
Pallid and pure, and hushed for evermore.
Even so, like lover bending o'er the tomb
Of his fresh-buried hopes, his palsied hands
Clasping Love's withered flowers, his pallid lips
Murmuring her name I muse by Autumn's bier.
Yet oft in dreams, beside the smouldering hearth,
When winter chills the blood, and nights are numb,
Methinks I hear a sweet voice evermore
Calling me o'er the wild, or over seas
Sounding ; or, gazing, see a shadowy hand
Waving a last farewell. Then oft I wake
To pace the naked heath or leafless woods,
If haply I may find in bud or blade

THE POET AND NATURE

Some token of her presence whom I loved ;
Vain search ! till lo ! where white-robed Winter stands,
And with uplifted finger points my gaze
To yonder vast immensity of heaven,
Alive with millions of immortal fires,
Brighter than ever summer skies revealed,
That like a soul's first glimpse of glory strike
The upturned eye. Then wend I nightly forth
Alone, to gaze on those unnumbered spheres
That, like Love's eyes by suffering purified,
To Nature's Fount and Love's pure primal Source,
With their angelic looks, do beckon me.



THE COLLEGE JAUNT.

FAR down the lengthening vista of the years,
How fade the visions of familiar scenes !
How from our gaze the loved past disappears !
How like a mist the present intervenes,
Remembrance of the past to cloud and mar ;
And from her old loves faithful Memory weans,
Who loves to dwell upon each setting star
That lit our pathway up life's steep ascent,
Until it tremble from the firmament.

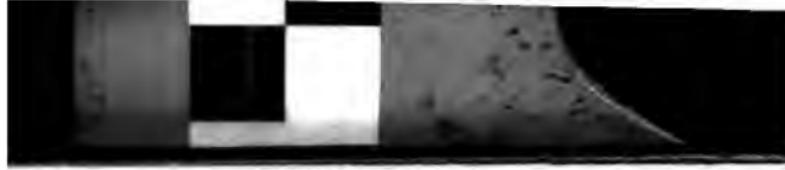
Yet oft it haps, from some dim mount of thought,
Touched with the splendour of life's setting sun,
Once more beneath our backward gaze are brought
The favoured scenes where youth's fresh morn begun.
As through a golden haze by fancy wrought,
The valley smiles, whence ever and anon
An echo on the charmèd air will float,
And pour its sweetness on the yearning ear
Of once-loved strains to fond remembrance dear.

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

There to our gaze, Time's opening mists disclose
Youth's morning sea, that bounds the glowing scene,
On whose bright lap Edenic isles repose,
By Memory's dews kept ever fresh and green.
Its storms have vanished, nevermore to rave ;
No more shall tempests break its peace serene ;
'Tis but the present hath a troubled wave,
The past is peaceful : on its placid deep
The shade and sunshine evermore must sleep.

So sleeps thy tranquil memory, fair town,
Scene of my fancy's first poetic dream,
Cheltenham, that wearest to my eye the crown
For beauty still, o'er all thy peers supreme,
That fashionable or fair presumptuous claim
Fair royalty's proud title, and who deem
None but themselves so well deserve the name ;
Grandiloquently styled for countless graces,
A royal sisterhood of watering-places.

How well remembrance paints thy pleasant streets,
And the cool quiet of thy sylvan squares,
Where smiled thy mansions in their green retreats,
And flowering lilacs wooed the fickle airs !



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

No din of vulgar trade thy peace disturbs,
No clamorous markets and few drunken fairs—
Less like a town than some fair town's suburbs
While like some avenue's umbrageous shade
Stretches the vista of thy Promenade.

Ha ! here is High Street ; yonder is the clock
Whose circling fingers travelled aye too fast ;
And here is Hobbs's, with his wondrous stock
Of newest styles, all warranted to outlast
Their meaner rivals—what strange trifles serve
To weave at times the raiment of the past !
In what quaint frames will Memory oft preserve
Her pictures in the gallery of the mind !
What curious links the past and present bind !

But hurry on ! here's King Street Corner ; hark !
The college bell ! How oft that well-known sound
Hath bade me haste to save an absent mark,
Or ushered in some study's dreary round,
Or marked the passage of each leaden hour,
Or broke some pleasant dream as slowly wound
Its iron clang through corridor and tower !
Ah, heaven be praised ! thou, bell, at least, no more
Shall break my dreams, or make my fingers sore !

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Full oft on holidays would we forestall
Its clamorous summons, waking ere the sun
Touched the high tower, or, over turrets tall,
Looked into silent rooms, or slanting shone
On book-strewn tables or leaf-littered floors.
Of morns like these, I well remember one
Whose memory will haunt me evermore :
Some five of us, fate willing, and the weather,
Had planned o'ernight a Severn trip together ;

And on a certain boat, renowned for speed,
At Tewkesbury to be hired, had fixed our mind,
And in close conclave thereanent agreed
To start betimes ; which ne'ertheless got wind,
And reached the ears of some like-minded friends,
Who thereupon a cunning plot designed,
To seize our boat, and balk us of our ends,
And leave us, all-belated, in the lurch,
Like Farmer Hodge one Sunday locked in church :

Who suddenly woke up, looks o'er his pew,
And finds the parson gone, the service o'er ;
Calls for the clerk, but finds him vanished, too ;
Just hears, too late, the clang of closing door,



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

The rusty key turning with sudden click ;
Then, furious grown, he waits to hear no more,
But rushes at the barrier with his stick,
In hopes to bring the worthy beadle back ;
As well might coax some victim to the rack !

That worthy man remembers in his youth
Strange stories told of certain vicious sprites
Who haunt the churchyard's silent paths ; in sooth
He doubts not this the goblin who affrights
Belated villagers by chance compelled
To cross his ghostly rounds on moonless nights.
Just then his name the frantic farmer yelled—
That solves his doubts ; voice so unearthly hoarse
Ne'er issued, sure, from aught but lungs of corse.

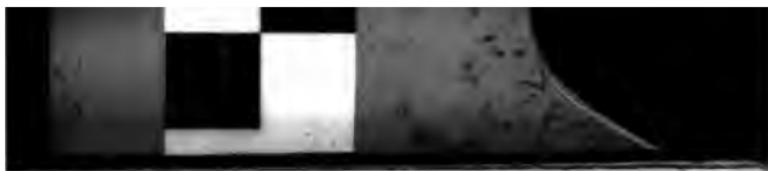
With lightning speed the worthy man sets off,
And gathers all his neighbours at his heels ;
And, though some valiant few the story scoff,
Each in his looks his wonderment reveals.
The parish constable, with oaken staff,
Stalks in the van, while, trembling, at his heels
The beadle follows, not exempt from chaff ;
Yet looking wondrous wise, as one, I ween,
Who more than mortal wight had heard and seen.

THE COLLEGE FAUNT

But, to be brief, as near the church they draw,
A deep, hoarse voice salutes them from within
That smites the assembly with a speechless awe ;
Wits cease to scoff, subsides each rustic's grin.
‘Why, man, thee'rt right !’ cries out the astonished
crowd ;
The village guardian strokes his stubbly chin,
Then, as the voice grows more unearthly loud,
Still struggling hard to smother a deep laugh,
He signals silence with uplifted staff.

Nearer, the farmer's well-known voice they hear ;
The speechless awe to wonderment gives way,
While the rude mirth extends from ear to ear.
‘The keys !’ cries out the crowd. ‘Make haste, I
say !’
The voice repeats ; the ponderous door unswings,
And shows the farmer to the clerk's dismay,
With looks that bode unutterable things ;
A village magnate he, almost a squire,
And proud, withal, as he had owned a shire.

In his vindictive looks the beadle sees
Sad danger imminent of dire disgrace :
Suspension from his office, loss of fees ;
Which each and all conspire to give his face



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

An air of such contrition, that the heart
Of Farmer Hodge relents. With well-timed grace
He laughs it off; the gathered rustics part
To tell the tale at home, that nothing lost,
To farmer's or to worthy sexton's cost.

Now for this long digression I must beg
My reader's pardon; but, if truth were known,
This story long had languished for a peg
To hang by, deemed too small to serve alone.
And now I'll to my story's thread again,
For which all, doubtless, are impatient grown:
Our friends' manœuvres proved, it chanced, in vain
For, getting broached, one of our company
From the head-porter begged the college key.

Within his 'breeches' pocket, buttoned tight,
He hid the prize, our '*Open sesame*',
And slept in the said articles all night,
Lest others might usurp their custody;
At three awoke, went round and roused the rest,
Too dark as yet the dormitories to see;
But soon we each and all were up and dressed,
At four stole forth along the silent road,
Before the cock the morning hour had crowed.

THE COLLEGE YUNI

Now let me here relate what further happed
Before our friends discovered we had fled
An hour or more our tardy rivals napped ;
Then woke their chief, forsook his cosy bed,
And round the dormitories in silence crept :
Found all as ' silent as the grave,' he said,
' Except a snore or two that told we slept '—
A kindness by some friend unconscious shown,
And by the dupe mistaken for our own.

With gleeful chuckle to his sleepy mates
The spy returned, and roused them up anon ;
The tidings of our sleep profound relates,
And bids them haste their habiliments to don ;
Nor loiter, fearful we perchance might wake,
And, wroth at finding our said rivals gone,
Strain every nerve their steps to overtake ;
So fled precipitate our phantom feet,
Heard in each footfall that strode down the street.

Nor now to linger o'er the tempting theme
Of all our eager footsteps that befell
Ere yet we reached sweet Avon's silver stream,
Suffice it here of that bright day to tell ;



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

How in our wake sweet matin music broke
From hill and dewy copse, or dimpled dell,
Where orchard thrushes the sweet echoes woke,
Or golden finches, the green boughs among,
Made all the meadows vocal with their song.

We were a merry set, a blither crew
Ne'er sallied forth on quest of pleasure bent ;
Our wishes boundless, yet our wants were few,
Nor recked we aught if troubles came or went ;
Alas ! for days like these, to pleasure given,
How few, methinks, do mortals' lives present !
Our day of bliss seems only one in seven.
These seemed, methought, our childhood o'er again,
Our boyhood's freedom mixed with thoughts of men.

But onward haste ! there is no time to sigh
O'er pleasures past ; see yonder, gleaming nigher,
Famed Tewkesbury's Abbey. In yon field close by
Was fought the bloody fight where son and sire
As deadly soemen met in dreadful strife ;
Where friend encountered friend in conflict dire,
And brothers won the curse of Cain for life,
And English hands with fratricidal guilt
The blood of English hearts unnatural spilt.

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

'Tis left behind : the town appears in sight ;
The silent streets with echoing steps we tread,
To where the river in the morning light
Glides glimmering past, while softly overhead
The morning breaks, and rosy dyes the stream.
Our boatman, too, I see, is still in bed,
But we'll soon rouse him from his morning dream—
That shout, methinks, his slumbers should dispel,
Though deep as on the Seven Sleepers fell !

An answering shout within his waking proved,
And soon in person at the door appeared
His sturdy form ; then toward the wharf we moved,
And from its harbour small our vessel steered,
The *Vivid* named, a trimly-built four-oar,
With rowlocks stout and pliant oars well geared,
By many a practised hand oft tried before.
Now toward the Severn full merrily we float
In what our leader named our 'jolly'-boat.

Now through the fog we glide with timèd sweep—
The dawn begins to blush along the sky,
And gild the distant hills undimmed by smoke,
That o'er the town will settle presently,



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

The sooty breath of many a household fire—
And see the glance of Sol's awakened eye
Has lit the vane on yonder tapering spire ;
While the white fog that hovered o'er the stream
Is turned to silver mist by morning's beam.

Where with the Severn Avon's waters blend,
A shallow promontory invades the mist—
'Now, steady here !' cries out our cautious friend
Who had the helm ; 'it's shallow here, I wist,
And we may chance to ground on yonder bank,
And find our boat capsized before we list ;
And I've no wish to join in such a prank.'
Just then a shout that echoed in our rear
Proclaimed our rival friends were drawing near.

The Avon reached, they found their dream was o'er,
Nor seemed best pleased at being undeceived,
And finding we long since had left the shore :
'The tale,' they said, 'was scarce to be believed.
Howe'er they yet might catch us,' as they knew
(What, ere the day was done, we, too, perceived)
Our boat was far o'er-balanced by their crew,
Who long ere this had learnt to ply the oar,
While of our own scarce three e'er rowed before.

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Then came the tug of war, the headlong race,
The oars flashed brightly in the morning light ;
The banks flew past at a tremendous pace,
And altogether 'twas a glorious sight.
We held the advantage by sheer dint of strength,
And kept our rival oarsmen just in sight,
Yet doubting not to be o'ermatched at last ;
But, after half an hour's exciting race,
Our rivals, for some reason, dropped the chase.

Then up the stream with lazy pace we rowed,
Admired the prospect, and the radiant smiles
That round the risen sun now freely glowed,
And lit the distant hills, like emerald isles
Embosomed in some soft cerulean sea ;
While round the billowy clouds in glittering files
Rolled lightly o'er the blue tranquillity.
By turns we steered, by turns we plied the oar,
And marked the murmuring ripples fret the shore.

On either hand the glowing orchards stooped
To hang their jewelled boughs above the wave,
O'er which innumerable apples drooped,
Lovely as Paris to fair Helen gave.



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

At times the sloping banks were smooth and green,
And rounded as some newly-swarded grave ;
And here and there the river flowed between
High shelving shores that all the prospect bound,
Where sullen rocks precipitously frowned.

Now for our morning meal we paused awhile,
And moored our boat beside a straggling fence,
By which we climbed the bank in single file,
And sat us down upon an eminence,
Whence we could watch our boat rock to and fro,
Or stretch our limbs in languid indolence,
Scan the blue heavens above or stream below,
Or laud the day's unsullied loveliness,
So beautiful, so bright, so blemishless !

Afar the monarch stream, with liquid sweep,
Hurried his silver legions to the sea,
With many a graceful curve by crag or steep,
Upon whose rocky face gleamed fitfully
The elfin light reflected from the stream,
Full oft concealed by cliff or waving tree,
Yet traced by many an intermittent gleam.
Westwards the Malverns' purple peaks arose,
Types of the fair and lovely in repose !

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

As by one impulse urged, each gazer feels
 His heart with sudden yearning fired to tread
The beck'ning summits of those breezy hills,
 And in his comrades' looks like impulse read.
Brief consultation held, again the boat
 We straight unmoor, and ere ten words were said
Were once more on the glancing stream afloat,
 Nor paused till Upton Church appeared in view,
Then hailed a boatman with a loud ' Halloo !'

With him in charge the *Vivid* there we left,
 Inquired the way, and at a right good pace
Made for the distant hills that, northward, cleft
 With verdant peaks the azure-vaulted space
That o'er them hung ; oft plucking, as we strolled,
 The ruddy fruit that ripened now apace,
Or corn that round us waved its tempting gold ;
 Or from the hedgerows haling their rich hoard
Of hazel nuts with milk-white kernels stored.

At length beneath the hills ourselves we found,
 And soon with nimble feet the summit gain ;
There traced, entranced, where silver Severn wound
 In sinuous windings onward to the main ;

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Where Worcester's gleaming spires arrest the view,
And glowing orchards clothe the verdant plain ;
With Cotswolds in the distance darkly blue,
And close beneath us, nestling like a bride,
Sweet Malvern couched upon the mountain-side.

Westward the heights of distant Wales were seen,
Towering like giant wardens of the land ;
Whose shadows fell on many a vale between,
Fair as Llangollen's, picturesquely grand.
Shades of departed heroes looming vast,
Through the thick mist of years, they seemed to stand,
And their broad ægis o'er the vales to cast.
Llewellyn, Glendower, in their looks uprose,
And frowned defiance on fair Cambria's foes.

So fancy feigned while westward wheeled the sun,
And warned 'twas time our homeward way to wend ;
Each gave a lingering look—his farewell one—
Then turned his steps the mountain to descend.
Once more in sight the welcome stream appeared ;
Our boat regained, we paid our worthy friend
His modest fee, then straightway homeward steered ;
But ere three hundred yards, or thereabout,
Our boat had sped, once more the well-known shout,

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Soon recognised, fell loudly on our ears,
That in the morn defied us to the race,
Renewing thus their challenge with loud cheers.
Though stiff and sore, an answering cheer we raise,
And settle to our task with timèd sweep,
Plying the yielding oars, and some brief space
Gaining upon our rivals as they creep
From point to point with well-directed aim,
That showed their 'helm' no novice in the game.

This wise manœuvre then our helmsman tried,
But with less skill, the oars to counteract ;
And one unlucky wight contrived to guide
The boat ashore, and pretty nearly wrecked
Our fragile bark, which gave our rivals ground.
Already our defeat appeared a fact,
But soon the boat sheered off all safe and sound,
The vigorous rowers clutched their oars again,
And set their teeth, and pulled with might and main.

By turns we steered, by turns we plied the oar,
Almost too tired our straining nerves to grasp
The galling blade, with blistered fingers sore,
That nigh had lost their wonted power to clasp ;



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Yet naught our ardour flagged, though oft I deemed
Determination breathed her latest gasp ;
As down our face the perspiration streamed
On our bare arms, and stiffened sinews clenched ;
But never rorer there or failed or flinched. *

Heroic then, in a heroic cause
The contest had been deemed ; and though no crowd
Urged on the rowers with their keen applause,
Or waited at the goal with plaudits loud
To hail the victors in the bloodless strife,
In each the Englishman triumphant showed,
That yields the struggle but with parting life :
And if for nothing more, that day I prize
That proved us Englishmen in our own eyes.

Now toward the goal we steered, and led the way
By some oars' length ; though doubtful still appeared
Who yet should claim the honours of the day,
Though hope rose high as to the close we neared.
A few strong strokes the doubtful day decided,
As the low promontory of sand we cleared,
And through the slanting archway slowly glided
That spans the Avon's waters just before
They to the Severn's add their silver store.

THE COLLEGE JAUNT

Soon to a village hostelry repair
Our wearied crew, with stiffened limbs and sore,
And o'er a homely meal's substantial fare
Recount, well pleased, their hard-earned victory o'er ;
Then, when cool evening settled o'er the plain,
Our homeward journey recommenced once more ;
The Abbey fades behind us, and again,
Scarce noticed now, the famous field flits by,
Nor draws aside one home-expectant eye.

Anon with cheerful songs, and rounds, and glees,
We wile the weary way, half choked with dust
From the bleached road upwhirled with every breeze,
And in our faces flung with every gust.
But once the breeze a richer burthen brought—
An odour half divine, that fleeting crossed
Our pathway like some glad ecstatic thought
That through a poet's brain is sometimes sent
To fill him with its perfect ravishment.

From some green garden-bower methinks it blew,
Of twisted honeysuckles intertwined
With jasmine, and musk-roses washed with dew,
And eglantine beloved of every wind ;



THE COLLEGE JAUNT

And there my fancy framed a vision fair
Of happy lovers neath the leafy blind,
And clustering blossoms, curtained from the stare
Of alien eyes, and for brief season blest,
Granted awhile of Eden's joys to taste.

Fit close it seemed unto that day of days !
Meet symbol of the memory that clings
About it still, when fond remembrance strays
Down the dim past, to muse on vanished things.
What faces loved with that sweet day are linked !
What sweet yet bitter memories it brings,
Through lapse of lengthening years grown indistinct !
O bright, brief day, what had our sorrows been
If we the distant future had foreseen !

And ye, dear friends, by whom those jovial times
Are still remembered, not without a sigh !
To you I dedicate these simple rhymes,
That, as I write, recall ye to the eye
Of fancy such as in those times ye were ;
And pray that still, as in those days gone by,
Ye may be blithe and innocent of care,
If such may be ; if not, as Heaven sends,
Who sends what's best : and so farewell, dear friends !

THE POET'S APOLOGY.

O MUSE, that in these modern times
 Encounterest thus the critic's eye,
And fondly deem'st thy feeble rhymes
 The speech divine of Poesy.

Some say the critic's art is dead
 That taught with reason to admire,
That once with sacred incense fed,
 And fanned the pure poetic fire.

Yet here methinks is little worth
 To move admiring raptures fine ;
To bring no glorious thought to birth,
 Or melt the soul, O Muse, is thine !

Yet let the critic carp or cry,
 My web is coarse, my west ill spun ;
My shuttle will not cease to fly,
 I fear me, till life's thread is done.



THE POET'S APOLOGY

I sing but as some little flower,
That knows the spring is near ;
Awaking, scents some woodland bower
By rivulet or still mere ;
Or like that glancing rivulet
That to itself doth sing,
While every wave its banks doth wet,
Low preludes to the spring ;
Or as in some lone leafy dell,
With many a welcome sweet,
The tiny warblers oft foretell
The music of May's feet.
I sing with whispers of the woods
To cheer the town-bred child,
With music of the rolling floods,
Or winds' loud anthem wild ;
To soothe the sick on pain's hard bed
With memories of May,
And fan the fever-aching head
With the fresh breezes' play ;
To interpret Nature to the heart,
Who from her meanest flower
Doth oft divinest truths impart
To souls that own her power.

THE POET'S APOLOGY

I sing with music's measured spell
To bid ill shapes avaunt,
That oft with doleful visage fell
The weary heart will haunt ;

With balm of gentlest sympathy
To staunch woe's bleeding wounds,
And soothe the mind's sad malady
With music's silver sounds.

And oft across the willing wires
There blows from heaven a breath,
That bids me sing with heavenly quires
His love who conquered Death.

O Thou who gav'st the glorious gift
And lent the golden strings,
Forgive if oft the minstrel lift
His heart to meaner things.

THE END.

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.









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